Change and Conflict in India

EDITED BY

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Introduction

It is customary to describe India as a comparatively unchanging region of the world. Indeed, some have even attempted to evolve a distinctive 'model' for the sub-continent. These articles selected from the pages of *Seminar*, the monthly symposium, present a combination of stirrings which suggest that profound social mutations are taking place. Admittedly, India has its own time-scale, and many centuries are telescoped into the present, but these years of enlarged freedom and more earnest development have set in motion forces which cannot be blunted.

The materials included in this volume were prepared during the first seventeen years of *Seminar*'s existence (1959-1975). It was a crucial phase in continental development and naturally influenced the writing of the period. In this selection, there is an underlying unity of theme. Against a sweep of history and growing numbers, we pass over the rural and urban scene. Then, age and sex. Religionalism, communalism, caste and untouchability take over, giving way to secularism, modernisation and planning. The backdrop is an interplay of the forces of tradition and modernity in Indian society. And there is a conclusion on the social sciences, and then prospects.

This collection of studies is a reminder of the extraordinary complexity and diversity of Indian society. To begin with, what is true of a situation or a region on the sub-continent may not be of another. The sub-continent is multi-cultural, multi-religion, with the stress on diversity and variety rather than on artificial conformism. There is a shared heritage which unites the sub-continent, but it would be a distortion of the reality to speak of single personalities, styles of living and value systems. Easy

generalisations of this kind create fuzziness in understanding.

In a sense, the Indian sub-continent is being opened up by the sustained and coordinated drive to develop its resources and productivity in industry and agriculture under the five-year plans. The comparative successes or failures of these efforts are immaterial. We are concerned with the social impact of these policies on the people at every level, people in their growing millions. So many questions form. If populations are going to double during the next twenty-five years, will it be possible to hold them in the village? What needs to be done to curb the migration from village to town? Are the cities doomed or can we successfully decentralise urbanism? How long will our youth remain in a strait-jacket prepared by an aged, traditional society? What role will the women of India play as taboos and customs dissolve in the amalgam of modernism? Will the traditional structures insulate Indian society from so many of the traumas of growth and development or has the frame become fragile with the assault on religious disciplines which weaken essential moralities and with the questioning of institutions like the undivided family which provide solid insurance in a situation far removed from social security? What is the modern context of caste, community, untouchability and regional loyalty? Has the democratic process achieved mutations which strengthen and modernise society or are we witness to the destabilisation of a whole civilisation?

These and so many other related questions are being asked all over the country. The understanding of the reality that is India today has yet to achieve a maturity that would give us the confidence to forecast with a certain clarity the direction in which the once-unchanging sub-continent is moving. But slowly the emphasis is being placed on critical assessment within a more coherent economic-political frame. This is important, and it is an effort which will give us new insights into our complex society. Fortunately, it is now the Indian scholar who is doing the pioneering work of unravelling the reality.

There is also in all developing societies, an attempt to direct social growth towards perspectives which skirt the now obvious pitfalls of advanced industrial societies and which are more meaningful in the context of the maturing of a genuinely civilised human being. Various utopias and utopia-mixes motivate such thinking, and it must be seen as an integral part of the social sciences in our

part of the world. In other words, it is not to be dismissed as so much romanticising and pontificating. And we have to locate this thrusting to comprehend the nature of change and conflict in our situations.

It is with some such thoughts that we have put this collection of materials together. We believe that the vastness and complexity of India is best handled in this *Seminar* way.

New Delhi
January 1978

SEMINAR PUBLICATIONS

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*A Sense of History**

ROMILA THAPAR

'Indians have no sense of history.' This remark has often been made and surprisingly no Indian historian has thought of taking it up and either refuting it or confirming it conclusively, by an analysis of Indian historiography. The constant comparison is with Greece and on occasion with China. When was there an Indian Herodotus? (described generally in that well-worn cliche, 'the Father of History'). The Chinese as early as the first century B.C. could boast of Ssu-machien whose *History* was to become a model for succeeding historians. Where are the Indian counterparts?

The answer to the question whether we are an historically minded people or not depends on what one understands by the term 'history'. If history is essentially the recording of dates and events, then we are an historically minded people, since we have produced many chronologies of rulers (the *Puranas* and *Vamshava lis*, for instance). If history means the description of happenings and the suggestion of connecting these happenings via causal relationships, then we have such accounts too—as in the work of Kalhana's Kashmir chronicle, *Rajatarangini* or the work of the Jaina scholar, Hemachandra, *Parishishtaparvan*. But when we come to analyse the type of causal relationship, we come to the basic difference in the historical writings of Greek, Indian and Chinese historians. (I am delibrrately using Indian in the limited sense, i.e., excluding the Muslim historians of India, since some purists maintain that these historians based their writing and thought on the Arabic tradition which anyway derives from the Greek.)

The cause-and-effect relationship in Indian historical writing is generally confined to either the moral aspect, i.e., because a king is good and pious his kingdom prospers and he is victorious in war, or else to the supernatural aspect, i.e., because a king is god-fearing, the gods help him in time of need. To some extent this limited

*From *Seminar* (39), November 1962.

understanding of causality was inevitable in a society dominated by ideas of *dharma*—the social order which could not be changed—and *karma*—one is rewarded or punished in this life according to one's actions. It is significant that a rational analysis of cause and effect is hinted at more frequently in writing influenced by Buddhist thought, but unfortunately Buddhist thought did not dominate the intellectual processes of Indian thinking for long.

It is the occurrence of this *rational* analysis of cause and effect, where historical explanation points to conscious human behaviour being the motivation of change in culture, that Greek and Chinese historical writings differ from the Indian. Although this type of analysis was not exclusively used by the Greeks and the Chinese, nevertheless it does occur with greater frequency than in Indian writing. The twentieth-century historian, concerned as he is with seeking for rational explanations of past events, is willing to accept the Greek and Chinese historical tradition as more authentic than that of India.

This approach to Indian historical writing and history led to the notion (among other things) that Indians in the early phase of their culture were obsessed with thoughts of the spiritual world and the after-life, without any interest in the material mundane world of every day. That this was patently untrue is evident if one considers the total stream of Indian thought, and not just the more dominant Brahmanical elements which anyway had the avowed intention to pontificate. This interpretation has influenced the writing of Indian history in the last fifty years. It has diverted the study of Indian history into a number of distressing channels, which have resulted in something of an impasse; in fact, Indian historians will have to challenge a number of existing assumptions before they can proceed further.

Perhaps the most important of these is the question of periodisation. The periodisation which comes immediately to mind is the popular misconception carefully nurtured by certain historians, of dividing Indian history into the three periods, Hindu, Muslim and British. None of these phrases are properly descriptive of the phases which they attempt to describe. They derive in part from nineteenth-century European thinking on India and in part from the communal movement in Indian politics during the twentieth century.

Lassen's work on Indian history (published in the mid-nineteenth century) made an impact on nineteenth-century thought. As has been

pointed out elsewhere, he interpreted Indian history in a Hegelian pattern, where the thesis was what he described as Hindu culture, the antithesis was the coming of Islam and the synthesis was the impact of Christian Europe. This division into Hindu, Muslim and British/Christian periods, although historically inaccurate, was nevertheless a convenient one at a time when knowledge of India's past was comparatively superficial. But to continue with the same terminology today is to make historical mis-statements.

One assumes that Hindu India was inspired by the Hindu way of life. Yet, the Hindu way of life was not a God-given code functioning from the beginning of history. It evolved slowly and did not really dominate Indian life until the Gupta period. The form of 'Hindu' culture as it existed during the Aryan time would probably be unrecognisable to the average Hindu today. In any case, previous to the Gupta period, Buddhism was a far more powerful force, although it would be equally fallacious to refer to the centuries B.C. as the 'Buddhist Period'. During the 'Muslim Period', both Hinduism and Islam as theologies underwent considerable changes, as is evident from the Bhakti and Sufi movements. If a comparative study were to be made of the life of Indians, at all levels of society, during the ninth and tenth centuries and again during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the significant changes which can be attributed to religion would be extremely limited and, in any case, more or less confined to the upper classes.

This raises another problem: whose history is being written, that of the rulers or that of the ruled? If it is the former, then historical writing can degenerate into a catalogue of dynasties as is often the case with textbooks on history in India. And since most of the rulers in the first thousand years of recorded history in this country bore Hindu names, it can be called the Hindu period, and the subsequent rulers bore Muslim names and those following, British. This insistence on kings and dynasties places too much reliance on official records and treats of the actions of rulers as in a vacuum.

We know all about Asoka's pious intentions, but what of the impact of his edicts on his subjects, for whom they were intended. What did the chariot-drivers and the elephant-keepers referred to in one of his inscriptions think of his ideas? This must surely have been a matter of some concern to the emperor himself—if his edicts don't lie. Was the *Din-i-Illahi* merely a brain-child of Akbar? Could it not have been a well-disguised blow-beneath-the-belt at the

aristocracy, who by mingling religious orthodoxy with politics was carefully upsetting the political position of the emperor? No question is preposterous in the process of reconstructing the past and unless it can be convincingly answered, the study cannot be regarded as complete.

To return to the question of periodisation: the other system is that of dividing Indian history into the ancient, medieval and modern periods. Generally, the ancient period covers events up to the coming of Islam, and it is therefore synonymous with the Hindu period. There have been attempts to limit the ancient period to the post-Harsha era (seventh century A.D.). The medieval period would then start with the Hindu medieval period in the seventh century and continue into the Muslim medieval period until the coming of the British in the mid-eighteenth century. Here, again, the medieval period in most histories is equated with Muslim rule and starts with the arrival of Muhammad Ghori. The modern period starts with the rise of British power in the mid-eighteenth century.

This type of periodisation is a confusion of the religious-based division with the desire to conform to the periodisation used in the history of Europe. The basis for this division remains somewhat illogical. In Europe its validity is based on profound social and cultural changes, ensuing from economic changes. If the same criteria were used in India, then the periodisation should follow a different course from the usual. The first change would be that of the emergence of an agrarian economy and the decline of the pastoral economy in about 600 B.C., bringing with it a religious and social change and the establishment of centralised monarchies and republics. The next epoch, the medieval period, should begin in the post-Gupta period with the breaking-up of centralised monarchies and the evolution of what has been called the feudalistic pattern of society. Finally, the modern period should begin with either the establishment of factories and entrepreneurial activities in Mughal India in the seventeenth century or else with the beginning of industrialisation under the British in the nineteenth century.

This type of periodisation, although an improvement on the religious division, demands a specialised knowledge of social and economic history which is unfortunately almost lacking at the moment in Indian historical studies. Therefore, the question arises as to whether we should accept the concepts of European terminology and apply them to India or evolve our own. Some of the more

important factors which went into the making of European feudalism, such as the economic contract regarding land, are not found in the same form during the Indian 'medieval period'. Do we all the same refer to it as Indian feudalism, or do we try and describe it in another set of terms, although using the same type of analysis.

Another problem arises in the acceptance of this type of periodisation, and that is, assigning dates to the various periods. Every region of the Indian sub-continent did not develop along similar lines, simultaneously. So far the periodisation of northern and central India has been under consideration. The social and economic history of South India cannot be made to fit this pattern. Here the change from the pastoral to the agrarian stage took place later in the early centuries A. D. Furthermore, the maritime economy of the south, based on trade with West Asia and South-East Asia, influenced historical development. The Chola Kingdom (10th–13th century A. D.) can hardly be described as a feudal State.

The problem is aggravated by the fact that Indian history suffers from a bias in favour of North India. Most histories devote only a small portion to the history of South India. It is assumed that the historical picture valid for the Ganges valley in the early phases and the region of Delhi in the later phases was more or less valid for the entire country. Thus, a research into regional history is a necessary step in the future. This does not mean of course the writing of chauvinistic histories of the provinces, but an attempt to place regional contributions within the framework of the total history of the country. This will perforce introduce the study of a culture in a more intensive form and will detract from the present emphasis on personalities and names.

A discussion on historical interpretation must inevitably include a discussion on sources. Indian history has relied very heavily in the past on literary sources, particularly official documents and records. Modern methods of research have provided a number of new sources which can be used as a means of cross evidence with literary sources. Archa ology is particularly relevant to the study of the early periods. Archaeology is concerned with the process of change in human patterns of living, and the archaeological fact is a tangible, three-dimensional fact. It can be used in a variety of ways: as a means of verification, as additional knowledge or as statistical data. For the economic history of the more remote past, for instance, it is invaluable. The evidence of habitation sites, urban centres, artifacts,

coins, etc., cannot be found in literary sources. Besides, a document may have been written with a particular end in view, now obscured; whereas the excavation cannot hide undesirable facts, if the site is properly excavated.

Anthropology is of considerable assistance in the writing of social history, particularly in a country such as India where there are still many communities at various levels of social expression. The study of these can provide clues to the working of society in the past. A case in point is the role of the caste system in the history of India. A historian relying entirely on literary sources will obtain a picture of the theoretical implications of caste, but will know less about its function in actuality. The anthropologist pointing out deviations in the practice of the system, may lead the historian to question the theoretical basis and attempt at discovering hints of deviations in his own sources. From the *kshatriya* caste were supposed to come the rulers and the aristocracy. Yet, there is a discrepancy between theory and practice, since most of the powerful dynasties of the early period were of non-*kshatriya* origin. Anthropological and sociological studies could also help in assessing the significance of customs such as *sati*, or movements such as *thuggee* in more recent times, or even the behind-the-scene activities of the 1857 Movement.

Collections of papers and objects in private families are as yet an untapped source for the writing of modern Indian history. These collections may be without any conscious motive of their historical value, merely things of interest to the family. Records and panchayat papers with village officials sometimes trace their history back to the Mughal period. Zamindar households in Bengal may reveal interesting material particularly for the social historians, which could act as a counterbalance to the National Archives. Other sources relevant to the writing of modern history are literary sources in the regional languages of which a systematic study is yet to be undertaken. The oral traditions can also be used to advantage. This is regarded with contempt by many historians, yet careful use of an oral tradition can at least provide an emphasis, if not facts. In any case, very often it is only the script which divides the oral tradition from literary source-material.

Indian history in the modern age was first written by European scholars, such as Lassen, Vincent Smith, etc., who believed that the finest civilisation was that of Greece, and the rest were rather inferior in comparison, although occasionally having their moments.

Another bias was that Asian history was in essence a series of despotisms, which ended only after various European powers brought enlightened governments to these parts. This was the overall picture, although the narrower and more intensive studies of these scholars were of a different order.

Indian historians of the twentieth century, therefore, began their career with a complex about Greek civilisation and about oriental despotism. Their histories were written in answer to the earlier ones, and sought to prove that Indian culture possessed all the characteristics of Greek culture, and despotism was almost an unknown factor in the Indian political tradition. The national movement for independence made its impact on historical writing, and the Indian past was glorified in order to encourage national pride. The so-called 'Hindu' period came in for a large amount of white-wash. The latter was also due to the more-spiritual-than-thou attitude which Indian opinion began to adopt as a means of countering the material superiority of the European. Fortunately, the period and the justification for the inferiority complex is over. We can now afford to be more honest with ourselves. We can question our earlier assumptions and reformulate our ideas on how our history should be interpreted.

*Our Population**

PITAMBAR PANT

The aim of economic development in India is to ensure a progressively rising standard of living to the people and to create conditions for this to happen without giving rise to undue concentration of economic power and large disparities in income and wealth. There should be widening opportunities for individual development and the social and economic disabilities from which various sections of the population suffer should be ended as quickly as possible.

This objective is embodied in the many articles of the Indian Constitution. It is also reflected in the decision taken soon after the adoption of the Constitution to initiate rapid economic and social development through national planning. India has the unique distinction of being the world's largest democracy with a parliamentary system based on adult franchise. A system cannot be judged, however, on the basis of abstract principles alone. The appeal of political democracy is greatly increased when its institutions show enough vitality and resourcefulness to tackle effectively the multifarious economic and social problems facing the people. In a democracy, at the centre of the whole effort must be the people—the object of all endeavour as well as the agents of all change. It is their wellbeing which has to be fostered and it is they who have to bring it about.

For a given rate of economic growth, improvement in per capita income and living standards depends on the rate of growth of the population; the faster the population growth the slower the pace of improvement in per capita income. The concern with the rapidly rising population of the country arises from the apprehension that the rate of increase in production might be too low in relation to population growth to make any tangible impact on living standards, even after a fairly long time. While income growth in India since 1950 has averaged only about 3.5 to 4 per cent per year, the growth

*From *Seminar* (130), June 1970. (Originally a paper prepared for the Southern Regional Conference on Population Policy and Programmes in Madras, April 1970.)

of population has accelerated from about 1.5 per cent in 1950 to 2.5 per cent twenty years later. Acceleration of population growth without a corresponding acceleration of the rate of economic growth must lead to the perpetuation of the poverty of the people.

The speed with which a country develops depends largely upon its ability to direct a sizeable part of its growing resources to savings and investment rather than to current consumption. It is difficult for a poor country to have a high savings rate. If it can set aside 8 to 10 per cent of its income for investment in the early stages of development, it is not doing too badly. But at this rate, if its population is also growing at 2.5 per cent per year, it will probably be investing just about enough merely to stay where it is. What is more likely to happen is that the rate of investment might be further reduced as a growing population, with a high proportion of dependent children, might find it increasingly difficult to spare as much income from consumption under pressure of meeting the larger demands for housing, education, medical, health, sanitation and water, etc., facilities arising on account of the larger population.

Population growth does not only tend to reduce the flow of investment funds, but it also means that resources available for building the economic infrastructure are insufficient and that capital invested in industry and agriculture is spread increasingly thin over the larger labour force. As a result, productivity suffers and living standards cannot be raised rapidly. The larger consumption needs of the people may also reduce availabilities for exports creating thereby additional difficulties for balance of payments. In the case of essential supplies, such as foodgrains, the scope for raising domestic production beyond a certain level, given the limitation of land and water, may be restricted. Excessive population could create serious problems as any effort to bridge the gap between supply and demand through imports for a country as populous as India may impose an unmanageable burden on the balance of payments. On the other hand, if the gap remains unfilled, there will be considerable pressure on prices of foodgrains which in turn may lead to an inflationary rise of prices all around and, ultimately, seriously impede the continued growth of the economy.

It is thus clear that in the context of the very modest rate of growth of the Indian economy, rapid population growth threatens to nullify the efforts to raise living standards in the country, and to create conditions which may make it very difficult for us to extricate

ourselves from a most unenviable situation. The problem has, therefore, to be tackled purposively and effectively. Fortunately, there is no need to accept as inevitable either the relatively slow rate of growth of national income or the acceleration of population growth, which have characterised the Indian economy in recent years. It is possible through planning and determined effort to speed up the growth of our economy. The fourth plan envisages a rate of growth of national income of more than 5.5 per cent per year during the fourth plan, and accelerating thereafter to 6.0 to 6.5 per cent per year by 1980–81. Simultaneously, there is the need and urgency of deliberate control over birth rate and death rate so that, while death rates are brought down steadily as a result of improvement of public health and medical facilities and general amelioration of living conditions, people are adequately motivated and suitably assisted consciously to regulate births and bring down the birth rate rapidly enough. It is this twin-pronged approach which offers the right and rational course for dealing with a difficult problem. Measures for population control and those designed to accelerate development cannot be considered as substitutes for each other. They must be viewed as complementary and actually supporting each element of a long-term strategy. The long-term strategy outlined in the fourth plan is based on it.

During the fifty years, 1920–1970, world population has increased 93 per cent, from 1,860 million to 3,590 million. The population of the more developed regions has increased by 60 per cent and of the developing regions by 110 per cent. India's population during the same period increased by 120 per cent, from 251 million in 1920 to 554 million in 1970. The annual percentage rate of growth of India's population during the decade 1920–30 was 1.06 and during the next two decades 1.35 and 1.24 respectively. There was sharp acceleration to 1.97 in the next decade 1950–60 and, further, to 2.35 in the decade 1960–70.

While mortality has been greatly reduced in India, fertility has suffered only a slight decline. This will be evident from the fact that while the death rate decreased from 36.3 per thousand in 1921–31 to 15.6 per thousand in 1961–71, the birth rate in the same period declined from 46.4 to 39.8 only. As a consequence of the high rate of growth of population, the Indian population has a relatively high proportion of young people. Thus, over two-fifths of the population in India is below fifteen years of age in contrast to less than a third

in developed countries, such as the USA, Canada and Japan which have a lower rate of population growth.

The Indian population is also characterised by early marriages. It is a striking fact that 19 per cent of the female population in the age group 10–14 is married. In the rural areas the proportion was as high as 22 per cent, while it was 7 per cent in the urban areas in 1961. The percentage of married among females in the age group 15–44 was 86 in rural areas and 79 in urban areas. The general fertility rate (GFR), namely, the number of children born per 1,000 women in the reproductive age group 15–44, for India is also significantly higher than the corresponding rate in countries such as Japan and England (including Wales). It was 195 for India in 1961 as compared to 72 for Japan (1960) and 91 for England (1962).

If the births of a recent year in India are classified by their order, that is according to whether the births represented the first, second or third child born to the mother, it is observed that the first, second and third order births, taken together, represent 55 per cent of all births, spread nearly equally between the three. The fourth and fifth order births contribute another nearly 27 per cent. The remaining 18 per cent are births of the sixth order and over. Seen against the background of the need for curbing population growth, this raises the problem of preventing the higher order births (say over 3) and spacing out the lower order ones.

Estimates of the likely level of population up to 1985–86 have been made by an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of the Registrar General of India on the basis of three alternative assumptions regarding fertility rates. The assumptions regarding mortality were kept the same in all cases. To the three estimates of fertility rates prepared by the Committee—high, medium and low—we have added two more, namely, (1) uncontrolled fertility and (2) very high. It is important to draw attention to the probability of errors in such projections concerning future population growth owing to the wide range of expected future variations in both fertility and mortality. There may not be scope for wide divergence in mortality where the declining trend is assumed on the basis of parallel experience in other countries. There is, however, uncertainty as to the degree of decline in fertility which can be realistically expected as well as the timing in which the decline may occur.

Table I gives the decline in the GFR in 1985–86 postulated in the different variants relative to the base GFR figure of 195 in 1961–66.

The mid-year (1 October) population estimates arising from these projections for 1975–76, 1980–81, and 1985–86 are shown in Table II. The projection for 2000–01 is based on the simple assumption of continued growth of population beyond 1985–86 at the rate estimated for 1985–86.

TABLE I: Assumption regarding percentage decline in GFR

	Variant	*GFR in 1985–86*	*Percentage decrease from 1961–66*
1.	Uncontrolled fertility	195	0
2.	Very high	142	27
3.	High	118	39
4.	Medium	100	49
5.	Low	84	57

TABLE II: Population projections

(in millions)

	Variant	*1975–76*	*1980–81*	*1985–86*	*2000–01*
1.	Uncontrolled fertility	644	750	868	1347
2.	Very high	639	727	806	1115
3.	High	639	720	784	1015
4.	Medium	624	690	740	919
5.	Low	610	663	700	834

Table II shows that the difference in population between that based on the assumption of 'uncontrolled fertility' and the 'low' variant is 34 million in 1975–76, 87 million in 1980–81, 168 million in 1985–86, and can exceed 500 million by the year 2000. Thus a delay in effecting a reduction in the birth rate may not appear to be too serious a problem in the short run but it can give rise to an unmanageable problem of population growth in the long run.

The 'medium' projection is the one recommended for adoption by the Expert Group and actually being used for population projections up to 1985–86 by the Planning Commission. It is to be underlined that even this projection implies halving the gross fertility rate during the 20 years 1965–85 (Table I, line 4, col. 3). And even with such a reduction there is the prospect of India's population exceeding 900 million in the year 2000. The age structure of the 1986 population

estimate under the different assumptions is exhibited in Table III. From a study of this table, it will be evident that the higher the population growth rate assumed, the larger will be the proportion of younger people in the population. The uncontrolled fertility projection has, for instance, 53 per cent of the population in the age group 0.19 as compared to 45 per cent in the medium projection. This means that the burden of dependency will increase, the need for providing suitable nourishment for children will be greater and there will be mounting pressure on school facilities.

TABLE III: Age structure, 1986

(Percentage)

Age (years)	*Uncontrolled*	*Very high*	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
0–4	16.8	13.2	11.4	10·2	8.9
5–19	36.1	36.0	36.4	34·6	32.6
20-64	43.5	46.9	48.2	51·0	54.0
65+	3.6	3.9	4.0	4·2	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is necessary to link the alternative projections made by the demographers with the quantitative increases that will be necessary in the use of corresponding contraceptive measures such as sterilisation, intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCD) and conventional contraceptives to conform to each of the projections. Leaving out the 'low' variant as being outside the realm of practical possibilities, an exercise of this type has been carried out for the 'medium' projection (Table IV). This exercise illustrates the magnitude of the task to be faced in terms of the increases to be achieved for sterilisation, IUCD and conventional contraceptives even to keep to the medium projection, i.e., a population of 690 million in 1980–81 and 740 million in 1985–86. Assuming a base level of 1.4 million fresh couples covered by sterilisation in 1969–70, the exercise throws up a figure of 3.3 million fresh couples to be covered by sterilisation in 1975–76, and 6.7 million fresh couples in 1980–81. Sterilisations will have to increase, by 15 per cent annually until 1980–81, whereafter they could stabilise at 6.7 million per year. Expressed in another way, sterilisations need to increase from 3 per 1,000 of population per annum at present

to 5 per 1,000 in 1975–76 and to 9 per 1,000 in 1980–81 and each year thereafter. On a base level of 0.48 million fresh couples covered by IUCD in 1969–70, the IUCD coverage will need to increase by 15–20 per cent annually, up to 1980–81 and by 10% per annum till 1985–86. This implies an increase from 1 per 1,000 per annum at present to 2.4 per 1,000 in 1975–76, 4 per 1,000 in 1980–81 and 6 per 1,000 in 1985–86.

In the case of conventional contraceptives, the increases over the 1969–70 base level of 1.55 million fresh couples will need to be 20–30 per cent per annum till 1980–81 and 10 per cent annually thereafter till 1985–86. Per thousand of population, this would mean an increase from 3 at present to 12 in 1975–76, 23 in 1980–81 and 40 in 1985–86. Incidentally, it has to be pointed out that even the 'very high' variant, which aims at keeping the rate of growth of population at about the current level throughout the period, implies active steps for birth control. Specifically, it implies doubling of the number of sterilisations per year by 1985–86, the quadrupling of IUCD insertions and an almost eightfold increase in the number of conventional contraceptive users (with 1969–70 performance as the base).

Although the birth control measures consistent with the medium projection will pose a challenge to our administrative capacities, the 1985–86 targets of 9 per 1,000 in sterilisations, 6 per 1,000 for IUCDs and 40 per 1,000 for conventional contraceptives can, by no means, be considered as being unattainable. The medium projection thus offers the best basis for action. The important question is whether the necessary tempo can be mounted and sustained to the degree and within the time-schedule as postulated with the existing programmes, policies, and organisational set-up for family planning. Shortfalls in year to year performance or delays in reaching the milestones in the prescribed path of birth rate reduction can significantly widen the gap between the actual and projected population in the terminal year. Any complacency in regard to the performance of the family planning programme or any tendency to accept minor or short-run success as sufficient advance are thus clearly unwarranted.

Operational performance needs to be related to demographic goals by means of exercises such as the ones illustrated above. The overall targets for different contraceptive methods have to be translated into specific performance yardsticks on a regional basis and for different age groups in the reproductive population and for couples classified

according to the number of children they have had. Considering that more than 60 per cent of couples in the reproductive age group (wives' aged 15–44) should be contraceptive users by 1985–86, this will be a formidable administrative task. Equally important is the necessity to keep under constant appraisal the acceptability and feasibility of different programmes, so that programmes and policies are modified and adapted to changing circumstances.

We have discussed so far the scale of the effort necessary on the family planning front in order that population growth in the next three decades will not exceed the 'medium projection'. It is useful to complement this discussion by projecting the magnitude of the effort necessary on the food production side to meet the consumption demands of the expected population having regard to the growth in per capita incomes and consumption expenditure in this period.

The long-term perspective up to 1980–81 outlined in the fourth plan indicates the quantitative dimensions of growth in terms of macro-economic magnitudes along with their implications for the levels of production to be achieved in key sectors, for balance of payments and for mobilisation of domestic savings. Net domestic product is projected to double over the twelve-year period 1968–80 while population grows by 31 per cent. By the end of this period the economy would have been launched on the course of self-sustained growth and would be poised for an even higher rate of growth. Since the per capita private consumption in 1980–81 would be only 42 per cent higher than in 1968–69, an accelerated rate of growth would be necessary to make a tangible impression on standards of living. A seven per cent growth of income, one percentage point higher than for the period 1973–74 to 1980–81 would seem to be the minimum desirable rate.

The overall rate of growth of the economy is greatly influenced by the rate of growth of the agricultural sector. Agriculture and allied activities contributed over 50 per cent of the national income in 1968–69. Nearly 60 per cent of total households consumption and 85 per cent of the commodity consumption of households is comprised of agricultural products or manufactures based principally on agricultural raw materials. The demand for agricultural commodities arise primarily from increases in consumption expenditure and growth of population. Given the expenditure elasticity of demand for each commodity and its base year level of consumption, the requirement for human consumption can be easily computed. The projected

growth of population corresponds to the medium projection. The aggregate consumer demand so estimated, together with the requirements for feed, stocks, seed, intermediate uses and exports, give the likely total demand for the various commodities. The domestic production requirements to meet the estimates of total demand for the major agricultural commodities are summarised in Table V.

TABLE V: Estimated production requirements for major agricultural commodities—India, 1968–69 to 1985–86

	Unit	*1968–69 (actual)*	*1973–74*	*1980–81*	*1985–86*	*Index 1985–86 over 1968–69*
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1. Foodgrains*	mill. tonnes	94.0	126	163	190	202
2. Oilseeds	mill. tonnes	6.93	11.0	15.7	20.6	297
3. Sugarcane	mill. tonnes	120	151	217	286	238
4. Cotton	mill. bales	5.27	7.54	10.6	12.9	244
5. Milk	mill. tonnes	21.2	29.3	48.5	70.9	334

* Estimated production of foodgrains in 1969–70 is nearly 100 million tonnes.

The doubling of foodgrains production, threefold increase in oilseeds and even more in milk, and two and a half times expansion in production of sugarcane and cotton to be achieved in the course of the 17 years, 1968–69 to 1985–86, are on the face of it, formidable tasks. Notwithstanding the promise of the 'green revolution', the possibilities of doubling and tripling production of various agricultural commodities have to be realistically evaluated. In order to assess the possibilities of achieving the level and pattern of output consistent with the demand, it is necessary to examine the main factors generating production increase. These are: (a) the feasible addition to crop area; (b) change in the crop pattern; (c) increase in per hectare yields arising from the spread of irrigation, use of better seeds, larger use of fertilisers and other yield raising inputs.

Gross cropped area is projected to grow from an estimated 164 million hectares in 1968–69 to 188 million hectares by 1980–81 and to 198 million hectares by 1985–86. The implied rate of increase (1.1 per cent per annum) is slightly below the rate observed during the first three plans. However, it is necessary to note that only about 40 per cent of the additional cropped area can be expected from accretions to the net sown area. This increase will be mainly brought about by the reduction of fallows consequent to the spread of irrigation and introduction of moisture conservation practices and improved dry farming techniques. The major portion of addition to the cropped area, however, will have to come from multiple cropping. The intensity of multiple cropping (measured as the ration of gross to net sown area) is projected to reach 1.28 by 1985–86, compared to 1·15 in 1964–65. The implied rate of increase in cropping-intensity is much higher than the levels recorded in the past. Rapid expansion of irrigation facilities and the development of crop varieties which can be fitted into tight rotations are the two principal prerequisites for achieving the targets.

The magnitude of the task is highlighted by the fact that the gross area irrigated has to be increased by 36 million hectares during the period 1964–65 to 1985–86. This order of expansion in irrigated area would call for a sustained tempo of new irrigation construction during the next fifteen years. With the advent of shorter maturing crop varieties and better utilisation of irrigation and water management, the irrigated cropping intensity is postulated to reach a level of 1.6 as compared to 1.2 in 1964–65. In unirrigated tracts a marginal increase in the cropping intensity is also visualised, which is broadly in line with the trends observed during the first three plan periods.

The long-term projections also imply a significant shift from the prevailing crop pattern. The proportion of area under cereals is smaller and that under commercial crops is larger than would obtain if the current crop-pattern in irrigated and unirrigated areas were to remain unchanged. There are several reasons to expect the crop-pattern to shift in this direction. In the context of better, more assured irrigation and the promise of current research on multiple cropping, there are good prospects for expanding area under pulses, oilseeds and cotton. In unirrigated tracts, the physical factors which would bring about the desired change in the cropping-pattern include soil and moisture conservation, evolution of drought and disease resistant crop varieties, and improved techniques of dry farming.

These physical factors will be reinforced by economic forces. If the existing crop pattern does not change, the supply of pulses, oilseeds and cotton would fall considerably short of rising demand. On the other hand, the area under cereals can, on the basis of known technology, supply all the requirements and more. There is thus a prospect of relative prices shifting in favour of commercial crops, which in turn would induce a reallocation of area (and other inputs) from cereals to other crops. We can also derive from the projected increases to total crop area and irrigated area under each crop, the expansion in the provision of inputs that will be necessary to achieve the increased production under each crop.

The requirements of fertilisers (Nitrogen plus Phosphorous) can be estimated on the basis of recommended dosages for each crop under irrigated and unirrigated conditions. It is assumed that while the average rate of fertilisers used in irrigated areas will reach the recommended levels by 1980–81, the rate of application in unirrigated tracts will reach only 50 per cent of the recommended levels by 1980–81 and approximately 75 per cent of the recommended levels by 1985–86. The estimated requirements of fertilisers (N plus P) are of the order of 9 millions tonnes in 1980–81 and 11 million tonnes in 1985–86 as against a consumption level of 1.8 million tonnes only in 1969–70.

Besides the expansion of area, irrigation and fertiliser, there are a number of other inputs which contribute to growth of production. Plant protection, higher seed rates and improved cultivation practices are some of the elements whose effects have to be reckoned in the calculations. In the absence of empirical data on which to quantify their effects, these residual inputs may be expected to contribute 15 to 20 per cent of the total additional production. The total effect of the various elements contributing to additional production is summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI: Annual growth rates (per cent) in area, yield and production

Crops	*1968–69* to *1980–81*			*1980–81* to *1985–86*		
	Area	*Yield*	*Production*	*Area*	*Yield*	*Production*
Cereals	0.6	4.1	4.7	0.7	1.8	2.5
Pulses	1.4	1.9	3.8	1.6	2.2	3.8
Oilseeds	2.6	2.3	4.9	1.9	2.6	4.5
Sugarcane	2.1	3.1	5.2	3.5	0.9	4.4
Cotton	3.4	1.7	5.2	0.9	1.7	2.6

The step-up in yield will need to be brought about by the application of fertilisers, irrigation and other inputs and the adoption of improved agricultural practices.

The production possibilities for the various crops are broadly in accord with the projected demand for them in 1980–81 and 1985–86. Given the expectations regarding the growth of various inputs, the target-levels of crop production seem feasible of attainment. For ensuring success, careful advance planning will be necessary, backed by sufficiently large resources and adequate technical and administrative inputs. Special attention will have to be given to (a) expansion of irrigation and improved water management; (b) fertiliser production programme; and (c) continuous and relevant research of high quality to solve problems of agriculture. This is going to be a difficult task even as it is. It will become far more difficult to manage if a larger than envisaged population growth will call for further increase of production from the limited land within the same period.

Even if production potential is assumed to improve, excessive growth of population comes in the way of improving the content and quality of food available for consumption. Instead of the production potential being utilised for producing more nourishing food for a smaller population, it will have to be used mostly to supply the calorie requirements of the essential diet of a large population at the cost of nutritional standards. Thus, rapid growth of population far in excess of what is envisaged in our Plans can be a crippling handicap, since our population in relation to resources is already large, incomes are low and economic development and improvement of living standards is a desperate need.

*The Village Scene**

M. Y. GHORPADE

We are on the threshold of a new decade. Whether dangerous or not, the next decade is bound to be more challenging. The tempo of events will increase and the pattern of change will become more intricate and involved, demanding clearer thought and finer balance in the formulation of political, economic and social values. The temptation to force facts into the straight jacket of pet theories and wishful models will have to be avoided. It will not do to oversimplify the process of change. Correct conclusions will depend on a deep and detailed awareness of the interrelationship between different factors and forces and a feel for changing human motivation. Especially with regard to the rural scene, it is important not to overlook the crucial diversities in our impatience to arrive at some sort of superficial conceptual unity. The baffling contradictions will have to be unravelled and resolved in order to arrive at the truth. What is the connection between the new agricultural strategy, land reforms and the increasing rural tension in different parts of the country is a question which cannot be answered without reference to the experience in the last two decades and the various seemingly unconnected factors which go to make up the social milieu. The subtle play of innumerable natural forces behind the changing colours and contours of the social horizon will have to be seen with a deep and discerning eye, free of political myopia. Rural India is changing but changing unevenly. And, sometimes, what appears to be a change is a change from tweedledum to tweedledee.

Food production has no doubt increased, but not faster than the growth in population. According to the Government of India's Economic Survey for 1968–69, the all-India food output in 1967–68 was 95.5 million tons, i.e., 7.4 per cent higher than the output of 88.9 million tons in 1964–65 when weather conditions were equally favourable. On this basis, the compound annual growth rate works

*From *Seminar* (**129**), May 1970.

out to 2.4 per cent as compared to the population growth rate of 2.5 per cent. During the bad seasons of 1965–66 and 1966–67 the all-India output was as low as 72 and 74 million tons respectively. In Karnataka, food production was 4.5 million tons in both the years 1964–65 and 1967–68 as compared to 4.1 million tons in 1960–61 and 1966–67 and 3.1 million tons in 1965–66.

Obviously, per capita food production has suffered. There is not much scope now for bringing more land under cultivation, and the increase in production will have to come largely from increases in productivity. It is significant to note that during the period 1952–62, while the all-India agricultural production increased by 2.9 per cent, productivity increased by only 1.6 per cent, the difference resulting from more land brought under cultivation. It is equally significant to note the wide variations in the development from State to State. In Tamilnadu, for instance, agricultural production and productivity increased by 4.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively, due to widespread rural electrification and irrigation and increased use of chemicals in agriculture. About 50 per cent of the irrigation pump-sets in the country are in this State alone.

The wide difference between average yields and high yields attained by many progressive farmers indicate the scope for further increasing production by better land and water management and more sophisticated use of fertilisers and other inputs. At present the average yield of rice or wheat varies from one third to half a ton per acre depending on the percentage of rice or wheat area under irrigation, which varies considerably in different States and regions. The same is the case with millets which are the staple food of the poorer sections in many States and deserve far greater attention. Yields of three to five tons of wheat or paddy per acre are attained by many farmers. Still higher yields are achieved by quite a few, clearly demonstrating the technological scope for doubling and trebling our present per acre average. But the point at issue is the slowness and unevenness of this development. While Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu have about 40 to 50 per cent of their cultivable land under irrigation, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat have less than 10 per cent of land under irrigation.

Irrigation greatly facilitates the use of fertilisers and other inputs. It means higher yields, employment and general prosperity, as a result of which the landless labourer gets higher wages and enjoys much greater mobility and relative freedom from the fear of

unemployment and starvation. In short, the landless labourer no longer remains so helpless. He can afford to argue, agitate and organise. Literacy, education and politicalisation also add to his equipment. Is it not significant that the areas of rural tension are largely coterminus with areas of irrigation and education? At any rate, visible rural tension is not coterminus with arid poverty stricken areas where the human being is too depressed by his condition to express dissatisfaction. The philosophy of dissatisfaction and contentment also undergoes a qualitative change with modernity. Pockets of rural tension are more in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu compared to Karnataka and Maharashtra.

At one time it was estimated, on an *ad hoc* basis, that against Andhra Pradesh's rice surplus of 8 lakh tons, Kerala had a deficit of 6 lakh tons, and Tamilnadu and Karnataka had a deficit of 1 lakh tons each. A single food zone for this area should help to equalise these surpluses and deficits. But, can we assume that our egalitarian States will sincerely subscribe to a policy of distributive justice and equality in food?

The other basic question is whether the price mechanism will take food to where it is needed most. How to avoid an imbalance in the availability of food between the high and low purchasing power areas? In Madhya Pradesh, the production per acre is the lowest in the country but the per capita production is one of the highest. A few years ago, when the price of jowar was Rs. 70 to Rs. 80 per quintal in Karnataka, farmers in Madhya Pradesh were finding it difficult to sell jowar at Rs. 40 per quintal. Last year, a lot of wheat in Punjab could not be lifted in time by the Food Corporation of India. The result was that the Punjab farmers could not be effectively assured a minimum remunerative price for their produce, and the wheat prices in the scarcity regions could not be brought down to a reasonable level.

There was a time when the yields per acre in our country were much lower than what they are today, but India could export foodgrains. The bulk of the people were living at subsistence level and there were famines and deaths because help could not be rushed in time. There are no such famines today but tension is mounting and it erupts, not in arid areas of utter poverty, but in regions of relative prosperity. Sociological studies indicate that social responsibility and discipline suffer in areas of plentiful irrigation, monetisation and urbanisation. The old social order breaks down and the new

struggles to emerge and find its feet. Political consciousness and education go together. That also partly explains why there is greater tension in Bengal, Kerala and certain parts of the South compared to the West and the North.

The principle of equality of status and opportunity is steadily but surely upsetting the applecart of caste strength and stability. Devolution of real power to the people will undoubtedly accelerate this process although, in the short run, certain conflicts and contradictions might come to the surface. This is inevitable. There is also an element of revolt against a social hierarchy which has ceased to be functional. There is the vague desire politically to correct what is socially unjust, arising out of a feeling to be treated like a human being and not like an inferior animal. All this arises out of a sense of insecurity and lack of faith in the justice of the top dog. But the fever of casteism must work itself out of our body politic before a new and more equitable social equilibrium is reached.

However, much of what is called casteism is nothing but individual opportunism which exploits the caste sentiment such as it is, at the grass roots level. At higher levels of power, we have an amorphous, horse-trading kind of politics based on personal power and prestige. It is faction-politics based on the interests of individual members. It is not predictable in terms of any recognisable principle. The coalitions in our country, for instance, are very often multi-caste, unstable groups. Even within a single political party there is not much of ideological clarity or consistency. Other forces and sentiments such as language, religion and region also come into play, but the dominant motive seems to be political opportunism. And even when we talk of the sentiment of caste, it is more relevant to talk of the innumerable sub-castes and family relations than of caste in its broad classification.

This is briefly the sociology and politics of tension. It is therefore misleading to suggest that the agricultural strategy of the 1960s has misfired and caused rural tension. The new agricultural strategy has shown the way to increase productivity. The increase in agricultural prices in the sixties (as a result of inflation combined with a sharp fall in production due to the unprecedented drought) made it possible for farmers to make economic use of fertilisers and other inputs in spite of their costs. (Prices of fertilisers in our country are more than twice as high as those in the UK and the USA. It is estimated that the consumption per acre of fertiliser nutrients in India is only 1/90th

of Japan, 1/150th of the Netherlands and 1/7th of the world average.)

The cost-return ratios of following the new agricultural package of practices became suddenly workable especially in certain irrigated tracts. However, in the rain-fed areas, which constitute the bulk of our agriculture, the cost-return ratios are not so favourable, making the use of costly modern inputs risky. Naturally, the progressive and economically stronger farmer of irrigated lands took the lead in following these practices and improving yields. But what he did had a significant demonstrative value and helped the movement to spread. In the case of irrigated paddy and sugarcane, where intensive cultivation counts, the size of the farm did not make a difference to the use of inputs. Here, it was not as though only the big farmers got the inputs or used it. Often the highest yields were attained by those who had a limited acreage to take care of. In the rain-fed areas, of course, the poorer farmers could not afford to take the risk of a failure of rains. Why blame the bureaucrat for these farmers not using much fertilisers and other costly inputs. Any stick ought not to be good enough to beat the bureaucrat with. After all, no system can work without a bureaucracy. And bureaucracy cannot be out of step with the dominant social and economic realities. In a democracy, the people and their elected representatives are the masters who take the credit and the blame.

Rural discontent is more a symptom rather than a cause for all these developments. Whether discontent is creative or not, it is not the same thing as the capacity to forge effective and purposive political, economic and social institutions that function efficiently and deliver the goods. It is stated that 'greed foments revolution'. But one must be reasonably strong, even to be noticeably greedy, and only reasonably greedy to move ahead without breaking down. Under rain-fed conditions, the bulk of small holdings represent subsistence farming. A new integrated technology for dry regions with cost-return ratios which are feasible even for the small farmer is yet to be developed. When this happens it will be a very major breakthrough in Indian farming. In Karnataka, an average increase of 1/8th to 1/4th ton per acre in rain-fed lands will add 3 to 6 million tons to food production while $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 ton increase in the average production of irrigated lands will add only 1 to 3 million tons to production. If dry farming becomes remunerative, it will radically change the social

climate and, perhaps, indirectly develop tensions. But this cannot be attributed automatically to the failure of any strategy. To some extent, the process of change is inevitably uneven and the change itself creates other problems.

Wherever labour is scarce and costly and the size of the unit permits mechanisation, farmers will try to use it in order to lower the cost of production. In Japan, where the average holding is very small, farmers use small power-driven implements. Is this not inevitable? Ultimately, depending on our capacity to absorb people in other fields of activity, is it not necessary to step up the average productivity of the farmer in order to increase his standard of living? In India 70 per cent of the people living on land produce only 50 per cent of the national income and grow the food for the rest, whereas in the developed countries of the world, less than 10 per cent of the population is engaged in growing food for the entire population.

In India, the bulk of farmers are at the subsistence level. Therefore, it would be very misleading to generalise about the profitability of Indian agriculture. Variations in cost-return ratios of different crops in different regions and types of soil and seasonal conditions will be a fascinating study in contrast and range of fluctuations. Has our agricultural policy devised tools fine enough to take this variegated picture into account? Crop insurance and an assured floor price will give the much needed security to the Indian farmer and enable him to use modern inputs without undue risk of failure or loss. A massive programme of purchase and storage of foodgrains at harvest time for distribution to the vulnerable sections of society during the lean periods, at reasonable prices within the purchasing capacity of the salaried groups and agricultural labour, is absolutely essential to maintain peace and stability.

To keep the pressure of increasing population on land within bearable limits, it is undoubtedly necessary to develop alternative employment opportunities in industry and trade. But the recent industrial recession has shown that in a country like India, heavily dependent on agriculture, the pace of industrialisation itself is dependent on the rate of increase in agriculture. As a rough approximation, a 10 per cent growth rate in industry requires at least a 5 per cent growth rate in agriculture. Otherwise, the demand for industrial goods falls short of the required level. This is what happened during the recession. This is particularly so in a country which depends

mainly on internal demand and only marginally on competitive exports, unlike Japan.

Infrastructure is very essential for sustained growth. But in a poor country the scope for taxation and savings is limited and deficit financing beyond a certain limit becomes the worst form of taxation by causing inflation and eroding the value of money and the real income of the poor. As we have seen, the per capita production of food has not increased but decreased in varying degrees in many States, but the prices of foodstuffs have increased beyond the reach of many. During the drought years, when procured and imported grain was distributed by government, many did not have the purchasing capacity to buy even at controlled prices.

In the ultimate analysis, if agricultural production cannot be increased at a faster rate than population, and if industry and trade cannot absorb more people and reduce the pressure on land, mere redistribution of land cannot solve the problem. It is well known that the per capita availability of land is at present hardly one acre. But vigorous and imaginative administrative action to implement the essentials of land reforms is necessary. Much may have been stated in the law. Let us see what is happening in practice. In law, a tenant is supposed to have security and become an owner by paying compensation in instalments. In practice, informal tenancy by oral leases and high rents continues untouched by law. Not many legal tenants have become owners by paying compensation as prescribed by law even in Maharashtra which is supposed to be in the forefront of land legislation. In certain areas, where the tenants are socially not so weak, they have been able to take advantage of the law regarding security of tenant and fair rent. But in other areas this has not happened. The law is too expensive and tricky for the really weak.

To the poor it is a major hardship to forego the day's wages and even to pay the bus fare to attend the law court, apart from the lawyer's fees, to defend himself and his rights. There is no provision for free legal advice and assistance. Land records may state the legal ownership of land. But how can they be made to reflect the reality or the actual cultivating conditions of each piece of land? Poor farmers in times of need and hardship will sign almost any paper for a little money and suffer a whole lifetime for it. Under these circumstances, how can all be equal in the eyes of the law. The law is blind they say. Some provisions of land reforms are too complicated. Take for instance the provisions regarding

resumption of land from tenants for personal cultivation. This is bound to lead to a lot of litigation. Where is the need to allow any further resumption of land? Resumption should be stopped. At the same time, the definition of personal cultivation should not be too rigid or narrow. It should take into account management and investment in land. Even small cultivators hire labour in order to complete certain agricultural operations in time. The concept of ceiling is the outcome of the pressure of population on land. But there should be some finality to it. Otherwise it will result in a different order of insecurity and inaction affecting production. Farming must be viable and attract adequate investment. It must be treated as an industry sensitive to costs and returns.

A simple law which is effectively implemented is better than a theoretically perfect law which inevitably leaves loopholes in actual implementation. Apart from the ceiling, it is important to concentrate on security of tenure and fixation of fair rent. Would this object not have been better served if the tenant had not been left to the mercy of the landlord but had been brought face to face with the State? The government could have acted as the intermediary and collected the fair rent and such other dues payable by the tenant. Rent should be fixed as a multiple of assessment and be about one-sixth of the gross produce. The important thing is to express rent in terms of fixed money amount. In an inflationary situation it becomes, in due course, a small item of expenditure from the tenant's point of view. The bona fide landowner who is satisfied with fair rent and is not interested in unfair evictions would have also been satisfied with this arrangement. This would have improved the status of tenants and they could have been given development loans more easily and enabled to make investments more confidently.

Survey and settlement, land records corrective drive and consolidation of holdings should have been vigorously pursued and completed before a target date in all States. At the time of consolidation, a portion of the land should be set aside for village community purposes such as extension of house sites, proper village planning with roads, compost pits, school playground, space for housing cattle, etc. The corrected village land records should always be available at the panchayat office so that there is no difficulty for any person to look into them and bring any errors to the notice of government either direct or through the *Panchayati Raj* bodies.

If 'law is slow moving, jurisprudence bereft of contemporary ideas and the administrative machinery inept', only the disciplined and organised will of the people must ensure that things move faster and become more relevant. But for that, the will of the people must crystalise and focus clearly on desired goals. It is not so much law, but the interpretation and implementation of law that counts. The International Commission of Jurists, in their publication on the Rule of Law and Human Rights, have stated that 'Law, as all other human institutions is never static. Within the changing pattern of human relations resulting from progressive social and economic advancement, the concept of the Rule of Law undergoes such adaptation and expansion as is necessary to meet new and challenging circumstances.' It also emphasises the 'lawyers social responsibility' to contribute to the promotion and understanding of the Rule of Law. Social responsibility implies a progressive social philosophy. 'Rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having', said Gandhiji. He also observed: 'If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind.' But, in practice, everybody does not do his duty and sometimes duty is interpreted to suit ones own ends. Assuming that everybody is prepared to do his duty, it will result in a stable social order only if all people defined and determined duty in the same way as Gandhiji who said 'Whenever you are in doubt recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him; will he gain anything by it?' It is obvious that there will always be the need for Gandhian action to rouse the conscience of mankind.

*Rural - Urban Migration**

ASHISH BOSE

A small but significant addition to the census questionnaire in 1961 is the item pertaining to the place of birth by rural and urban breakdown. This coupled with another new item regarding the duration of residence of migrants in the place of enumeration will yield a wealth of data on rural-urban migration. In the context of rapid urbanisation in recent years, the need for such data cannot be overemphasised. It has been estimated that over one million persons migrate from rural areas to urban areas every year in India.

In censuses prior to 1961, the question on birth place indicated only the district of birth of persons born in the State of enumeration, and only the State of birth for persons born outside the State of enumeration. This yielded a measure of inter-district migration within any State as well as inter-State migration but there was no way of knowing rural-urban migration. Another limitation of earlier censuses was the lack of data on the year of arrival of the migrant in the place of enumeration or the duration of residence in the place of enumeration. Thus the quantum of internal migration indicated by the census denoted 'lifetime' migration. That is to say, a person who migrated to a place, say, fifty years back was treated in the same way as a person who migrated only one year back. This seriously handicapped the utilisation of the data on place of birth. In the context of planning, one would be interested in knowing the magnitude of internal migration in recent years, say, in the last five or ten years.

Thus the absence of rural-urban breakdown of the data on place of birth and the absence of data on duration of residence rendered the question on place of birth ineffective for any study of urbanisation directly based on census data. The 1961 census will be a great step forward in removing these deficiencies, though not totally. It may be noted that even in this census, no direct question will be asked on migration. The place of birth will decide if a person is a migrant

*From *Seminar* **(18)**, February 1961.

or not. There are cases, however, where the data on place of birth may not be indicative of genuine migration. For example, in several parts of India, social custom demands that a married daughter goes to her parent's house on the occasion of her first child birth and even subsequent child births. Thus the child becomes a migrant even though he is brought up in his parent's house merely because of the fact that he was born in his maternal grandfather's residence. To give another example, a village woman may deliver a child in a near-by city hospital thus rendering the child a migrant from an urban area to a rural area as far as the census is concerned.

The data on duration of residence also is not without its limitations. The mere fact that a person was born in a village and enumerated in a city and has declared that he has been staying in the city, say, for the last ten years, does not necessarily indicate that he migrated from his village to the city. He might have gone to some other town and stayed there for some years before migrating to the city in which he is enumerated. This will denote intra-urban migration and not rural-urban migration. There may be cases where persons who are born in a village and enumerated in the same village, migrated to several places during their working life and in old age returned to their village. The census will take no note of such migrations. In the absence of a direct question on migration (the place from where last migrated and the year of arrival in the place of enumeration), these limitations are bound to crop up. But it must be remembered that the census can never be a substitute for a migiation enquiry. This has to be a simple affair and the best way to find out migration is to ascertain the place of birth, because once a direct question on migration is asked, a host of conceptual and operational difficulties crop up. Very often the best way to solve a problem is not to raise the problem at all.

To mention just one problem in this connection, the question will arise: Who is a migrant? Is a person who works in a city and spends Sundays and holidays with his family in the village a migrant? Is a person who works on the land for six months and in the city for the other six months a migrant? The conventional question on the place of birth makes a facile assumption that there is only one migratory move, from the place of birth to the place of enumeration. This avoids by definition all complicated questions regarding the characteristics of a migrant: any person born outside the place of enumeration is a migrant.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the 1961 census will yield a wealth of information on internal migration and especially on rural-urban migration. The types of migration which the census will reveal are as follows: (a) migration from one rural area to another; (b) migration from a rural area to an urban area; (c) migration from one urban area to another; and (d) migration from an urban area to a rural area. These migration types will be cross-tabulated by geographical areas as follows: (a) Persons born within the State of enumeration: (i) born in the place of enumeration; (ii) born elsewhere in the district of enumeration; and (iii) born in other districts of the State. (b) Persons born in other States.

The migrants will also be classified by the duration of their residence in the place of enumeration. There will be a separate set of tables for the big cities which will give basic data for migrants regarding sex, age, literacy and education, economic activity, and so on. This will highlight the problems of big cities. The 1961 census, thus, will not only indicate the streams of migration and the quantum of migration but also the demographic, economic and social characteristics of migrants. This will greatly facilitate an appraisal and give a more realistic slant to economic and social planning and policy-making.

Even though past censuses did not yield data on rural-urban migration, this topic was invariably discussed in all census reports. Often very ingenious reasons were attributed to the drift towards towns and varying levels of urbanisation. The 1901 census report on India points out that 'race also is an important factor (in urbanisation), and the Mongoloid element in the population of Bengal may be less inclined to congregate in towns than the Dravidian and Aryo-Dravidian inhabitants of other parts.' (pp. 27–8) The 1931 census report on India has a different viewpoint on this issue. It says: 'It may, however, be questioned whether race has in this case anything to do with the matter, and we should be inclined to account for the phenomenon not by race but by rainfall. The areas of the greatest precipitation in the peninsula are the Malabar Coast, Bengal and Assam and if living in cities is unpopular, as it certainly is, in these regions it is perhaps rather on account of the greater degree of discomfort which it involves than on account of the racial composition of the people.' (p. 49) The 1931 census report on Karnataka quotes a Kannada proverb which says: 'After ruin go to the city.' Elaborating this point the report says: 'It means that a man who has lost his

property in the country and can make no living there, can find work and earn a living in the city. It implies also that while he can live in the country he would not think of going to the city. This is the attitude of the mass of the population. To a previous generation the thought of leaving the native village for good was the last of all calamities.' (p. 69)

But things began changing particularly during the Second World War. Growing industrialisation meant an increasing demand for labour in the cities and the stream of rural-urban migration broadened. The 1941 census report on India, while discussing the causes of urbanisation, says that apart from industrialisation, 'another and much more potent reason than is usually realised, is the fact that city life has begun really to appeal to the ordinary middle class or lower middle class'. (p. 26) This brings us to the 'push and pull' factors behind migration. Is it the increasing pressure of population on land which pushes people out of villages or is it the lure of city lights and the myriad attraction of cities which pull villagers to cities? To some, push and pull are facets of the same phenomenon: there can be movement only when things are better somewhere else and they may be better because things are bad at home.

The dichotomy between push and pull factors is somewhat of an over-simplification. There may be cases of migration where neither push nor pull is important; for example, the transfer of a government employee from one place to another. There may be cases where pull and push operate alternately: a villager is attracted towards a city because of higher wage rates there but he will come back to his village when he becomes unemployed in the city or falls sick. The push therefore can operate in the other direction as well, that is, from a city towards a village. But on balance it is true that in India today, push offers a greater motivation for migration than pull. The economic hardships in a village for an average person constitute a much stronger motivation for him to seek work in a city than the so-called attractions of cities of which he can very rarely take advantage.

There is a less gloomy side of the picture too. With increasing industrialisation, employment opportunities in the cities have increased considerably (though they have not kept pace with the increase in labour force on account of increase in population). Further, urban wage rates are higher than the rural. Urbanisation insofar as it is a concomitant of industrialisation is directly related to economic development. In the process of urbanisation in India (which

has started only recently), the big cities (population: 100,000 and over) have played a dominant role. During the decade 1941–51, the total urban population of India increased by 18 million of which the big cities accounted for 10 million or over 55 per cent of the total increases in the urban population during the decade. According to the 1951 census two-fifths of the total urban population of India is in the big cities. Greater Calcutta alone claimed 74 per cent of the total urban population in West Bengal. During the decade 1941–51, the population of some of the big cities increased at spectacular rates. Growth rates of a few such cities may be mentioned here. New Delhi: 195 per cent, Tollyganj (Greater Calcutta): 156 per cent, Rajkot: 99 per cent, Bangalore: 92 per cent, Vijayawada: 87 per cent, Dehra Dun: 83 per cent, Madras: 82 per cent, and Delhi: 75 per cent. In some of these cities the heavy influx of refugees from Pakistan has been primarily responsible for the high growth rates.

This city-ward migration of people can hardly be called the process of urbanisation. The decade 1951–61, however, has been a decade of planned economic development and the 1961 census will, for the first time, indicate the different facets of the industrialisation-urbanisation process in India. We are all aware of the appalling human failings in the process of urbanisation but the fact remains that we have reached a stage from which there is no return. For countries like India, faced with the prospect of rapid industrialisation, the problem is how to àttain economic development without the evils of urbanisation. Is it possible to avoid the experience of the West and evolve a less wasteful and more human process of industrialisation and urbanisation? Need cities be parasitic? How best can we integrate the rural and urban economies in a harmonious process of development? These are difficult questions which our planners must face.

*Growing Cities**

HEMALATA ACHARYA

Diametrically opposite opinions are expressed regarding the urban-rural interaction pattern. Some view the rapid expansion and growth of cities with much misgiving while there are a few who do not consider growth deleterious in and by itself but only under certain conditions. The former look upon the expansion of cities as something unnatural and out of tune with man's inner urge. They draw an idyllic picture of village communities of the past and feel that man can live a full life in such arcadia. One need not object to such an opinion, if it were not for the fact that it springs from individuals who know the meandering course of history and who also are familiar with recent sociological development in the theoretical fields—especially in urban sociology. The latter have their own prepossessions and prejudices, but they are not dogmatic in their assertions. Instead of suggesting utopian solutions to the present unplanned growth of cities, they dig deep into the malaise and recommend a pragmatic approach. To this class belongs the Hoffman Report (World Bank Mission on Calcutta). It is sufficiently outspoken, but it is not alarmist. It focusses the attention of government and the planners on the weakest spot of urban development.

The magnitude of the task becomes obvious when one realises that the population of Calcutta has grown to 6,000,000 from 3,000,000 in 1948. This includes 800,000 refugees, but even then the size itself is surely a cause of much of the tension which prevails in Calcutta. The Hoffman Report reveals on a macro scale the consequences of the unplanned expansion of a city as an independent entity and the impact of such an expansion on the region of which it is a significant part. A city is not an isolate. A city like Calcutta with all its manifold ramifications can be understood only if we know the history of its birth and its frantic efforts to come into its own, in the face of many adverse circumstances. Moreover, it is what it is because Bengal is

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what it is. Calcutta has its *gestalt*, made up of the *zamindari* system; the mass conversion of the lower class of the Mohammedan religion, the Bhakti movement and the complete indifference of the urbanised absentee landlords to the well-being of labourers working on their fields.

During the pre-British period, India was not totally free from wars, which in a way checked the growth of population. Foreign rule, administrative unity, and the absence of internecine wars bred a sort of callous indifference to life which gave a spurt to population increase. The breakdown of the joint family—an inevitable consequence of right in private property and increase in mobility—made people seek fresh fields and new pastures. Railways made this movement possible while the new administration willingly absorbed those who qualified for the jobs. Cities to which the British gave special attention had their origin in the 'Western-Indian' complex. They were imbroglios of cultural-administrative and industrial activities. Segregation and isolation of the ruling class from the indigenous population was reflected in the ecological patterns and layout of streets. To some extent these cities may be considered 'plural' in their design—an attempt to institute western cities in an Indian milieu. Therefore, Calcutta is not an unusual phenomenon. Almost any new city in India is a Calcutta in miniature.

This article is exploratory in its nature. It does not eschew explanation, but it has no finality about it. It is inevitable that what seems to us pertinent in the context of the facts at our disposal, may turn out to be absolutely wide off the mark after the accumulation of more data. This caution is not without its rewards, for it has been rightly said that finding the right questions to ask is more than half way to finding the right answers. In this respect we are fortunate in having numerous reports bearing on one or the other aspect of the urban situation. The *NSS*, the reports of the surveys conducted by the *RPC* of the Planning Commission, publications like *Poona: A Re-survey* (by Professor N.U. Sovani, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics) and the decennial census reports, provide enough material to make our generalisations more realistic and, if need be, to prove our hypotheses with confidence. However, it would be impossible, and also inadvisable in this exploratory article to go into the niceties of these data. They will be referred to at the appropriate place to substantiate a statement or two.

At this juncture, it would be better to spell out the main approach

of this essay, so that one may avoid confusion. The 1961 census is almost round the corner. It coincides with the end of the Second Plan and the commencement of the Third Plan. The census of 1951 was conducted with not much preparation. The country was still struggling to get out of innumerable adverse circumstances. There was disorganisation all round. Frustration and deprivation were the common features of our social life. The Second World War had affected normal routine even in the remotest villages. Rationing, black-marketing and shortages brought villages into the whirlpool of city-civilisation. The disbanded men of the army carried discontent and dissatisfaction to their villages. Again, the census was never accepted ungrudgingly. In the past, up to 1941, it was associated with foreign rule. The people never gave a correct answer to the questions put to them. Such a report was rather more in the nature of a sociological encyclopaedia, than an informative and factual document. The 1961 census hopes to break a new path. Keeping this background in mind we shall consider the growth of cities in the perspective of the past, present and the future. This will help us in unravelling the intricate design from the tangled web of socio-economic relationships.

In order to explicate the role of cities in the atomic age, one must go back to the pre-industrial age—or, for that matter, countries at the pre-industrial stage (difficult to find in their pristine purity in this age of worldwide communications). For cities are not independent of time and space configuration. Professor Kingsley Davis writes: '. . . what is important is not only the appearance of a few towns or cities but also their place in the total society of which they were a part.'[1] It would be apt to remark that villages or cities are not merely organisations structured in terms of size. They are each a social phenomenon, having their own spatial and temporal relationships. In a village, land-mindedness is all-pervasive. A peasant and a pauper are environment bound and, as Dr. Bailey has succinctly emphasised in his thought-provoking book, *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, land changes hands but land determines power structure. In a city, on the other hand, man is freed from the bondage of the physical 'environment'. Inasmuch as he is liberated from his direct dependence on land, he also gains more mobility. He develops confidence and comes to question traditional authority. In such an atmosphere science takes deep roots, scientific attitudes are inculcated, individualism and

[1]Kingsley Davis, 'The Origin and Growth of Urbanization in the World', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LX, No. 5 (March 1955), p. 429.

scepticism spread. He develops sophistication and shuns his fellow beings. These are the two extremes, in between which there are agglomerations, wherein one does not find the rural and the urban sharply contrasted. In the pre-industrial countries the rural way of life is ever present, just as in the industrially advanced countries the urban style has penetrated everywhere.

References to cities in the past are many. Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Erech, Babylon, Tell-el-Amarna arose in India, Mesopotamia and Egypt respectively, when the situation was conducive to their growth. Writing, accountancy, a semblance of science and the knowledge of the use of metal, adequate to cope with the rudimentary specialisation of that early age—all these were known. But the cities were small as Childe and Piggot have commented upon.[2] The study of early city development shows that cities of that period flourished at the expense of the enslaved mass which produced a surplus, and it has been estimated that to support one man in a city, eighty or ninety farmers were required.[3] It may be surmised that the cities of the past were limited in their size because of imperfect technology and inadequate knowledge. This applies to the cities of Greece and Rome as well as to the medieval cities. They were all tied to an agricultural economy and, therefore, lacked an independent nucleus for survival.

In India, we have scattered descriptions of city life in our epic literature. In the Vedic *samhitas*, Indra has been characterised as a destroyer of forts. Does this suggest that the urban way of life prevailed in India before the Aryans came to India? This is also borne out by the remains of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Later, Hastinapur, Indraprastha, Kapilavastu, Takshashila, Vaishali, Pataliputra, Kanauj and Ujjain, all have had their historical roles. They were well-governed cities. Accounts of the administration of cities in the South[4] are also available which portray the basic pattern of city life, even today discernible in many of the ancient towns. There is beauty, there is art, there is religion, there is business, there is caste and there is exploitation. Life is static, today and tomorrow are alike. Past and present are woven like warp and weft into the same fabric.

With the dawn of the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, we have become city conscious. In the intervening period

[2]V. Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History*, Penguin Bks Ltd., 1942, p. 87. Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, Penguin Bks Ltd., 1950, p. 165.

[3]Kingsley Davis, op. cit., p. 432.

[4]*Silappadikaran*, translated by Dikshitar.

in India, we had cities which may be called 'functional' (though all cities are functional) to the requirements of the period. There were capitals of empires, district headquarters and *taluk* towns, military towns, religious centres, cities on the trading routes, cities on the highways and cities with special occupations such as weaving, brass works, etc. This list is not exhaustive but only suggestive. Mention may be made of the artificial creation of cities by the British, when they instituted native States by balkanising various regions. Saurashtra is an instance in point, where every third place is a town. Calcutta, Bombay and Madras are the products of British rule and all three have become the nucleii of trade and industry because of their location near waterways. Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Bangalore and many other such towns grew in importance with their metamorphosis into industrial towns. As the cotton textile industry become a *fait accompli* the old weaving centres decayed. Similarly, with the disappearance of old dynasties, the dynastic capitals disintegrated, military towns disappeared and the trading outposts of the pre-railway period slowly and silently waited for their doom, as the railways spread out in different directions. It is in this sense that the word functional is applied.

Religious places stand as a class apart. Varanasi, Nasik, Allahabad (Prayag), Rameshwar, Jagannath, Dwarka have tenaciously persisted in spite of the ups and downs of history. To these towns artisans from all over the country were attracted. Some of these places became famous for particular crafts, e.g., Banaras for its brocades, Nasik for its brass vessels. During the pre-railway period it took months for pilgrims to reach their destination. They invariably moved in large numbers, and they stayed for quite some time at one place. Incidentally, it is these pilgrims who carried with them memories of the places they had seen, and the impressions of the people they had met. It was through these channels that the 'Great Tradition' percolated to villages and village self-sufficiency was intermittently broken.

The present writer, in a study of Nasik city, has found the basis of these generalisations. In the study of the Tambats[5]—an artisan caste from Gujarat—we have sufficient evidence of immigration of artisans from outside, to take advantage of the market for their wares. In another study, 'The Urbanizing Role of the One-lakh City' an

[5]*Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (September 1955).

attempt is made to indicate how Nasik has changed from early days to the present time. Nasik, the Old Town, is entirely isolated from the main currents. Today, Nasik's activities are not concentrated in the central business area, though it has its relevance in the context of retailing. Industrial units being small in scale, have been established at places convenient to owners, rather than advantageous to the industry. Since power and raw materials do not offer any situational concessions in Nasik, industries are widely distributed. Like all other cities in the West, Nasik also is incorporating adjacent areas. This eventually may give rise to a conurbation.

The centrifugal tendency which is a marked feature of urbanisation in many industrially advanced countries, is also not absent in India. This has been very ably noted by Dr. Ghurye.[6] In this article, he has presented a clear picture of how Poona City is incorporating adjacent villages—'Krishipuras' as he calls them. This process of 'urbanisation' is not an isolated occurrence. Many towns are expanding outwards and developing an 'urban fringe'. Commenting on this particular aspect of urban growth, Kingsley Davis states: 'The same forces which have made extreme urbanisation possible have also made metropolitan dispersion possible, and the dispersion itself has contributed to further urbanisation by making large conurbations more efficient and more enduring.'[7]

In India, from the evidence at hand, it seems the cities are rapidly increasing—both in number as well as in size. In this struggle the law of the survival of the fittest holds and a few parasitic cities are finding hard to survive and are giving way to others more dynamic. The Census Report of 1941 predicted this trend in no uncertain terms in that the Census Commissioner, M.W.M. Yeats, wrote: 'India has been so often referred to as a land of villages that the real dimensions of its urban element are apt to be forgotten or not realised at all.... That rate is high and increasing.... India is in for urbanisation on a big scale.'[8]

In spite of halting and haphazard industrialisation and a total indifference to the interests of the hinterland and underdeveloped regions, the urban population in India between 1921 and 1941 grew by 33.5 per cent, while the rate of population increase in the country was

[6] Dr. Ghurye, 'Prolegomena to Town and Country Planning', *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (September 1960).

[7] Kingsley Davis, op. cit., p. 436.

[8] M.W.M. Yeats, *Census Report*, Government of India, 1941, p. 26.

15 per cent.[9] This is in keeping with the world trend. Urban sociologists have collected empirical material to underscore the dimension of this particular change. There is no doubt that it will have far-reaching consequences not only in the industrially advanced countries, but also in the developing countries of the world. That the change is making itself felt even before there is industrialisation will create confusion worse confounded and perhaps will act as a precipitate of other social welfare measures, which lagged far behind the economic development in the initial stage in the contemporary advanced countries. Some of these features of urban growth are disconcerting. This is why participants of the joint UN/UNESCO Seminar, Bangkok, 1956, argue that India was 'over-urbanised'. Whether this fear is valid or groundless requires to be proved but its delineation of the situation is not far from correct.

TABLE I: Growth of ten cities, 1931–51

		1931	*1941*	*1951*
1.	Greater Bombay	1,388,644	2,488,083	2,992,997
2.	Bombay	1,161,383	1,489,883	2,840,011
3.	Delhi (Old and New)	347,539	521,849	1,743,992
4.	Madras	647,230	777,481	1,429,985
5.	Greater Hyderabad	466,894	739,159	1,085,074
6.	Ahmedabad	310,000	591,267	788,310
7.	Greater Bangalore	306,470	406,760	776,170
8.	Kanpur	243,755	487,324	704,536
9.	Lucknow	274,659	387,177	497,594
10.	Poona	198,878	258,197	485,486
		5,344,652	8,147,180	13,344,155

Data adopted from tables found in *India and Pakistan Year Book*, 1952–53 (Bombay, 1953) XXXVIII, 14. (quoted by Robert I. Crane, op. cit.)

[9]Robert I. Crane, 'Urbanism in India', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LX, No. 5 (March 1955).

Table I gives a comparative picture of the growth of ten important cities of India between 1931 and 1951. This is a decisive indication of the fact that cities are growing very fast in India. Another fact bears reiteration in this context. Even though India is on the road to urbanisation, considering the size of its population and the area of the country, the rate is not high enough to act as a radical force in the near future. Urbanisation per se is not pejorative. What matters is the way it permeates the society. The two plans have engendered a few new forces which are bound to encourage urbanisation trends, e.g., steel towns, industrial and mineral exploitation projects, multipurpose projects, etc. But these specialised towns have their limitations and sometimes they draw on the labour force of surrounding villages. What may cause disturbance is not their existence, but their planning or the lack of planning. The Census Report of 1951 reveals another feature of urban trends in India. Table II shows the percentage distribution of town-dwellers in different zones of India. It is apparent from the figures that Western India is more urbanised than Eastern India. Saurashtra is the most urbanised with 33.7 per cent population as town-dwellers. The lopsided distribution of urban population has repercussions on all sectors of life and creates strains and stresses which are terribly destructive.

TABLE II : Percentage of town-dwellers

Eastern India 11.1	West Bengal	26.1	
	Bihar	6.7	
	Orissa	4.1	
	Assam	4.6	
Western India 31.2	Saurashtra	33.7	
	North division of Bombay Deccan	26.5	Deccan
	South division of Bombay Deccan	26.2	Deccan
	Bombay Gujarat	25.2	Deccan

Source: *Census of India*, 1951, Part I.A. Report.

TABLE III: Number and territorial distribution of great cities

Territory	*1881*	*1891*	*1921*	*1931*	*1941*	*1951*
India	18	22 [a]	23 [a]	29 [a]	47 [a]	70 [b]
Bihar	1	1	1	1	3	5
Bombay	4	5	5	5	6	8
Hyderabad	1	1	1	1	1	2
M. Bharat	—	1	—	2	2	3
Madras	1	1	3	4	6	13
Mysore	1	1	1	2	3	3
Orissa	—	—	—	—	—	1
Punjab	1	1	1	1	3	3
Rajasthan Ajmer	1	1	2	2	4	4
Saurashtra	—	—	—	—	1	3
Travancore Cochin	—	—	—	—	1	2
Uttar Pradesh	6	7	6	7	12	16
West Bengal	1	1	1	1	2	3
Delhi	1	1	1	1	1	1

[a] Srinagar had to be omitted for want of data in 1951.

[b] Srinagar omitted. Howrah, Tollyganj, Garden Reach and South Suburban area grouped with Calcutta as one unit. Bhopal included in the total.

Source: Dr. Ghurye, 'Cities of India', *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 1 (March 1953).

Table III is instructive in two ways. First, it depicts the uneven distribution of 'Great Cities' (*a la* Alfred Weber) in different regions of India and, secondly, it shows how urbanisation is only a recent phenomenon in India. The number of 'Great Cities' increased only between 1931 and 1951. It is therefore not unlikely that in the 1961 census we may get further evidence of the intensification of this process.

Now we shall allude to the distinctive marks of urbanisation which may become prominent in the years to come and may demand our studied attention. They are not exceptional to India but their timing is so inopportune, that they may endanger the very foundation of the economic and social structure of the country. In a planned economy this can be prevented if planning is total, and deliberate. Before this point is elaborated it would be better to direct our thought to the more urgent and demanding outcome of urbanisation.

There are interconnected factors which contribute to the growth and expansion of cities. Dr. Ghurye, in his article quoted earlier, has also stressed these factors. They are (a) difference between birth and death rates, (b) immigration and (c) incorporation of adjacent areas. As to the first, in the study of Nasik city, it was found that up to 1947–48 death rates were higher than birth rates. (see Table IV). Even then, the population of Nasik city increased from 24,100 in 1881 to 97,042 in 1951 and today it is nearly 100,000. This affirms the general findings that cities have grown by accretion rather than by reproduction. Since in many cities of India, sanitation, health and hygiene leave much to be desired, the death rate is invariably high. Only in recent years are city governments consciously striving to eradicate many preventible diseases and the results of these efforts may be reflected in the 1961 census. This means that cities will have both exogenous (immigration) and endogenous (natural increase) forces of growth.

TABLE IV: The birth and death rates per thousand in Nasik city, 1923–55

Year	*Birth rate*	*Death rate*
1923–24	36.84	32.02
1927–28	31.8	34.25
1933–34	22.47	33.71
1937–38	25.40	40.2
1944–45	38.57	26.28
1946–47	34.19	39.01
1947–48	21.36	25.33
1950–51	46.98	33.15
1951–52	30.03	16.51
1952–53	29.37	15.94
1953–54	29.11	17.19
1954–55	30.96	13.90

Source: *Administrative Reports*, Nasik Municipality.

To counteract the tendency, there may be another force. Birth control measures find ready response in cities, which may help to lower the birth rate. How far this is true cannot be prefigured. The 1961 census may be some guide to it. One need not be too hasty on this count. Cities in India are not perfect. There are slums, there is

poverty, there is housing shortage, there is unemployment, there is overcrowding and birth control has influenced only a small minority of the population. Therefore, if the population grows by natural increase, this is bound to aggravate not too happy a situation. Dependency rate to dearness will rise and when the young population comes of 'age' it will intensify the struggle for employment opportunities.

TABLE V: Percentage of 'immigrants' to total population and their source, in eleven cities, for which information is available

		Percentage of 'immigrants' to total population 1954–55	*Percentage of 'immigrants' from rural area to total population*
1.	Baroda	10.7	4.4
2.	Bhopal	42.4	16.5
3.	Bombay	22.5	10.3
4.	Calcutta	43.6	32.7
5.	Delhi	35.5	11.0
6.	Gorakhpur	30.8	17.6
7.	Hyderabad	14.6	7.2
8.	Jamshedpur	52.2	43.2
9.	Lucknow	10.4	6.2
10.	Madras	24.6	21.4
11.	Surat	5.7	8.2

Data collected by the Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission and quoted by the *Foodgrains Enquiry Committee Report* (Mehta Committee Report).

Most of the cities have grown and are growing by immigration. Table V furnishes data on the migrant component in the urban population. The table further indicates the source of immigrants, which apparently is rural in the majority of cases. The attraction of the rural population to urban areas has been widely pderceive. It is this large scale immigration and the availability of the avenues of employment that has forced the large cities to incorporate adjacent areas through unplanned 'conurbation'. The coming census will throw tremendous light on this intractable situation. As it is, the urban and the rural areas both imperfect remain units wherein

men strive vainly to better themselves. The rural is dull and drab, the urban is flashy and flamboyant. One pushes, another pulls, there is no assistance, and man fights alone the battle of life. In the end, he succumbs. But in his defeat, one can read not the failings of men, but the shortsightedness of administrations.

There is nothing wrong with cities as the handiwork of men. What one should dread is not 'urbanisation' but concentrated urbanisation—a few cities growing at the expense of the region or the country at large. With the application of science and technology to agriculture, the day is not far off when the perpetual fear of shortage of food may become a thing of the past as it is more or less so in the USA. T. Schultz in one of his articles has elucidated the collocation of circumstances which have affected this change.[10] His main thesis veers round the application of science and technology to land. Such a revolutionary change may not be feasible in India, but one can blunt the sharp edges of urbanisation by forethought and planning. By 'assisted urbanisation' and 'decentralised urbanisation' we can control the unfettered and indiscriminate growth of cities. Both will help in broadcasting urban attitudes and urban amenities in the farthest corner of the country. Added to these, if the planners have some blueprints to explore the resource potential of various regions, the emigration and along with that the denudation of talent and manpower from rural areas may be halted.

The development should be village-centred. It should not encourage 'villagisation' of villages. On the contrary, the villages must be made a significant unit of social change. Here the plea is for regional planning so that the organisation of a region through the maximum utilisation of its resources, enriches the culture of the people and releases them from rigid tradition and makes them discard fissiparous and divisive institutions like caste. If there is anything imperative today, it is the planned action that bridges the gap between the developed and underdeveloped, the rural and the urban. Poor, solitary, listless and uncared for, villages without any civilised amenities like pure water supply, lighting and access to roads, are as dangerous as crowded slums, infected and lifeless towns. Both must be eradicated.

This unfortunately cannot be accomplished by going back to the

[10]T. Schultz, *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Nanawati Number, December 1959.

imaginative village communities of the past. Our roads may be in the past but our eyes must be on the future. It is impossible to resist the temptation of quoting Professor Sorokin who remarks: 'Due to the new sources of energy like electricity and radio, railways and automobile, telephone and telegraphs and so many other factors (including the atom bomb and energy) there has appeared a new trend towards "urbanization", that would give us a socio-cultural world in which the specifically urban and rural traits are merged together....'[11]

[11]Sorokin, *Society, Culture and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics*, Harper & Row, New York, p. 302.

*Youth**

RUDOLF GYAN D'MELLO

In our kind of political structure some degree of economic malfunctioning is to be expected. Even if effective economic controls could be instituted, deficiencies would persist—but of diminishing magnitudes. The question is at what stage does a particular malfunction become a problem; unemployment is built into the structure of a free society. Therefore, distressing as it may be in human terms, it is not regarded as a vital problem until it threatens the stability of the established social order.

The unemployed, whatever their economic condition, are focal points of tension in society. When unemployment is fuelled by the educated, the situation can become potentially inflammable. In this situation, given the right prerequisites, there can be an explosion, even if one does not normally subscribe to the big-bang theories. Admittedly, this may appear to be adopting an extremist view, for there can be several little bangs before the major one or before everything subsides into quietude, until the next stage of criticality. Certainly the country is throbbing with little explosions and minor flares, indicating that the situation is readying for something more dramatic. Those who have infinite faith in our capacity to absorb all kinds of social injustices and external influences, banking on our past history and philosophical traditions, might well be in for a shock. We are no longer contained inside our traditional cultural frontiers by the natural geographic ones, as we were until recently.

There are statistical obstacles in the way of assessing the magnitude of the unemployment problem. No computation of the available data yields reliable figures. When examined closely they tend to wobble. (Presumably because of this difficulty or because of the unpleasantness of the present facts, the later draft of the fourth plan omits some of the relevant figures that used to be included in the previous plans.) The problem can be further complicated by varying

*From *Seminar* **(120), August 1969.**

the definitions of the term 'unemployment'. One could arrive either at proportionately large or small figures. The sample surveys currently used by the Planning Commission take as their basis one day a week employment to classify the employed. On this basis the resulting figures naturally are low. Admittedly, the ILO (International Labour Organisation) also uses a minimum of fifteen hours a week employment as a criteria for the employed. But this kind of sophisticated definition of unemployment is more relevant to the conditions in countries with developed economies, some of which provide unemployment benefits. In a general environment of affluence, individuals not earning a living wage have considerable reserve powers of sustenance.

In our situation, specially for village-migrants to urban areas, unemployment can frequently be equated with starvation. In any case, for most of them even employment at prevailing prices and wage rates means just existence above the bread-line. Moreover, there are the under-employed, i.e., working part time, or accepting jobs below their qualifications like engineering graduates in the clerical profession. Sometimes the reverse position is also true: those who are under-educated holding positions well above their competence. Probably, of the two kinds of malemployment the latter is more dangerous to society.

An acceptable definition of unemployed could be an individual not being in a state of remunerative occupation despite his desire to be so. The oft quoted figure for current unemployment is around ten million.[1] This seems a reasonable working figure. For, it represents approximately 2 per cent of the total population or 5 per cent of the current labour force (190 millions). A figure of this magnitude may be considered to be within the area of toleration. But even this figure is liable to suspicion. For, not all the unemployed or the job-seekers are registered with government employment exchanges. As stated earlier there are unspecified numbers of under-employed. One estimate puts them at 17 to 21 millions. But even if the under-employed are not considered as problematic politically, the educated unemployed are very much so. According to other sources the figure is around a million. Since, according to current sample-surveys the ratio of educated to uneducated is 20 per cent, this seems again a very reasonable figure.

[1] Directorate General of Employment & Training, *Employment Review*, 1961, Min. of Labour, Employment & Rehabilitation, New Delhi, 1967.

What is indisputable is that the number of educated unemployed is increasing yearly not only because of their increase in absolute terms but also because since 1965 there has been a steady downfall in the number of notified vacancies. Job opportunities are decreasing and in 1967–68 there were the highest number of educated job-seekers, about 5.6 per cent. In 1963, for eight lakhs educated unemployed (i.e., matriculation and above) well over one lakh were placed in jobs. Today, for nearly ten lakhs in the same category, less than a lakh of jobs could be found. (Those who believe that unemployment is decreasing may consider why there were 11,000 applications for 25 posts of management trainees advertised recently by a company manufacturing oil engines.) It may be argued that the fate of the educated unemployed as against the uneducated, needs greater attention because education has widened their areas of competence; because there has been greater investment in them (through education); because the decisions of a potential managerial executive can affect the fortunes of large numbers; i.e., if education is not a claim to employment it certainly buttresses it.

In fact, their fate appears to some as the more tragic. This is questionable! For, the uneducated are deprived of both education and employment. And all the unemployed are a waste of potential productive capacities. It is just a matter of degree. In our state of development we can ill afford to waste any human productive capacity. And in the long run the uneducated unemployed, by their sheer magnitude, will be politically more significant although their politicalisation may take place at a slower rate than that of the educated. (That is why I would tend to disregard the division between the educated and uneducated unemployed for the purposes of assessing their political implications and view the problem from the larger context of all the unemployed.) What is certain is that without cost-benefit analysis being applied to education, the system is set on a course that is producing, and will produce, more than enough people with a general non-technical, non-professional education. Thus, we are following a policy of erring on the side of over-supply (mostly with 'half-way degrees').

During the fourth plan there will be a predicted increase of 25 millions in the labour force. The fourth plan is expected to generate 18.5 to 19 million new jobs, i.e., unemployment will be increasing by a further 6 to 7 million. Adding the present backlog of 10 millions, it will make a total unemployed force of about 16 to 17 millions.

According to one member of the Planning Commission, these estimates should be even higher. The present backlog is around 13 millions, by the end of 1970 it will be 27.4 million and by the end of 1979 it will be around 60 millions. Even if the estimates vary there is no gainsaying that the investment/employment ratio has declined over the past three plans: against an investment of Rs. 10,191 crores in the first and second plans, 19 million jobs were created (7 million in the agricultural sector and 12 million in the non-agricultural sector). In the third plan an investment of Rs. 10,400 crores resulted only in 14.5 million new jobs (4 million in the agricultural sector and 10.5 in the non-agricultural sector).

Percentage increases among the educated unemployed during the year (1968), in the different categories were:[2]

Matriculates	13.2% as against 12.4% in 1966–67
Undergraduates	22.6% as against 10.7% in 1966–67 and
Graduates	31.3% as against 17.8% in 1966–67

Surely, one of the objectives of planning should be to provide employment for all job-seekers at a living wage. After making allowances for time-lags between the loss of a job and the finding of another, the economy should aim at equating the number of vacant jobs with the number of unemployed. After all, we have one of the longest and continuous programmes of manpower strategy. Several institutions have been established for dealing with manpower questions so that overall economic and social development might not be impeded by imbalances. We are not looking for optimal plans in a utopia but seeking to provide the necessary minimum to all. For, unemployment is not only unutilised productive capacity but also a form of maldistribution of wealth. Therefore, in a welfare state the social injustice inherent in unemployment is sought to be remedied by the grant of doles or other benefits.

In a socialist state there is no unemployment theoretically and, therefore, beyond the scope of this essay. But in a State with a mixed economy like ours, unemployment can become an instrument in management/labour relations, the tilt depending upon the ideology at the helm. A little more tilt in the wrong direction could create a political force out of the unemployed. The direction in which this

[2] *Employment Review*, 1967–68.

force will be channelled will depend upon the motivational impellants provided by the powers that be. It has been said that the failure of the Third Plan marks the virtual collapse of political authority over our economy.

Regarding the problem a little more closely, there is no doubt about the high rate of unemployment and literacy in Kerala and West Bengal. One is tempted to conclude that there is a correlation between the high degree of unemployment and the formation of Left-oriented governments. This conclusion would be reinforced if reliable statistics could be obtained about the unemployment situation in Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. One would find in all these States that the unemployment rate was high. (The exceptions to this pattern are Tamilnadu and Punjab where despite low percentages of unemployment, regional parties completely captured the reins of power.) The explanation seems obvious. Support for the ruling party declined because doubts had crept in about its capacity to plan the economy and not only because of sudden shortfalls in agriculture: For, it is not only the unemployed who is affected by his situation in our society with its closely-knit families, parochial feelings and caste loyalties. A single unemployed individual affects three increasingly widening circles of voters: (a) family and close friends, (b) neighbours and groups around the home and (c) relations outside the village.

Increasing numbers of unemployed in a given group, given village, given caste over a period of time have roused a spirit of scepticism, especially of the promises of politicians. This credibility gap between the political organisations and electorate is widening. (The writer met with an identical kind of sceptical hostility in different States or different regions of the same State while canvasing in the 1967 elections. The reaction could be summed up as 'no politicians, no parties; we want food, we want jobs'.) As a newspaper correspondent after a survey wrote with some perspicacity: 'In the General Election this time there are no all-India issues as such—there are only all-India grievances centering on rising prices, which are creating country-wide privations and unrest. Foreign policy, defence, socialism, and self-reliance are not even major talking points. The people are concerned with food shortage, inflation, jobs....'[3]

No amount of verbiage can cover up the hard reality which the

[3]*Times of India*, 15 February 1967.

jobless have to face every day. If they are educated they have wider means of communication and, consequently, can project their frustrations and privations over a larger area. The political scepticism fanned by the educated, trickles down to the semi-educated and finally reaches the uneducated (or is it the other way round?), creating an atmosphere of disbelief and resentment. The fact that some of the unemployed may become party workers or others may join political parties to obtain employment does not invalidate what has been stated in the previous paragraphs. Those who find employment through political parties are marginal and therefore hardly scratch the skin of the problem and, frequently, when they do, only increase the hostility of those who are better qualified but lack the necessary god-parents.

Nepotism of any kind and other irregularities are particularly abhorrent to the younger generation. Although the reasons for the current youth and student unrest are complex, one of the key factors is the prospect of unemployment at the end of their education that many students dread. Society has trained them to regard education as a spring-board to occupation and has not oriented them towards self-employment, except in a very small circle of the new middle class that has arisen from refugee settlers. Job security is highly prized at every stage as evidenced even by marriage advertisements in the columns of Sunday papers. Moreover, if they come from a rural background their parents may have had to borrow finances for their education, with the expectation of repayment after the completion of studies. Unemployment then can make education appear as fruitless investment for the parents and a source of perpetual worry to the students.

There are also other psychological factors like value-disorientation and enforced suppression of natural aggressiveness which confront the growing child. During the educational phase his system of rewards is very different to the one he finds in the non-protected world outside. There is a large disjunction between the process of education and the wider social system. Whilst in the educational field he is rewarded simply on the basis of his academic, sporting, or other abilities, in the wider world he finds that rewards are not related to achievement, hard work, or ability but other factors like family connections, caste and so on playing a significant part. At an earlier stage, when he is more involved in the family circle, he is brought up in an over-protective environment coupled with a hierarchical

structure which forces him to suppress his natural instinct towards aggressiveness or combativeness. Even at the university level frequently he has no sporting facilities to teach him to pattern and channel his aggressiveness. Therefore, he grows up frequently into a little bomb compounded of frustration insecurity and aggressiveness ready to go up any moment. All he now requires is a political detonator. Unemployment may not be the detonator but could well prove to be the prerequisite to detonation.

It will not do for the elders to look back to the pre-independence days when they willingly accepted unemployment. This kind of willingness cannot be expected in the post-independence period. Independence now means sharing of the social produce. Unemployment is denial of the share to which every individual component of the State feels entitled. As stated earlier, unemployment is a form of maldistribution of wealth. When goods to be shared are not enough for all the claimants, what might be called the vicious socio-economic circle of underdevelopment comes into operation. When the total wealth is improperly distributed, the preservation of democratic consensus becomes less and less possible; when consensus begins to erode, it undermines the effectiveness of government; with less effectiveness, a government's capacity to promote economic development is weakened; when economic development slackens, it increases the shortages of goods (even without a galloping rate of population growth).

In the final analysis, unemployment is much more than a denial of economic goods. It is a deprivation of the opportunity to an individual to fulfil his social obligations for which his education and other endowments have qualified him. And this need to fulfil himself in society is a deep rooted human quality which can be ignored at the greatest of peril. For, this deep social craving stirs forces which only those feeling dispossessed can generate. Resorting to violence today in Andhra Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra or Tamilnadu are not only the 'anti-social elements' but there is also a large percentage of white-collar workers, mostly young. The educated unemployed may no longer be content to 'turn first pink and then, red'. They may well spark an explosion with foreseeable consequences.

*Gerontocracy**

PUPUL JAYAKAR

What does gerontocracy—the rule of the old—mean in a country like India with its exploding population, where the old grow older and the young impatient? To the young, the old appear to be in control everywhere—in politics, in government, in universities, in Art Councils. The old predominate. Like 'the old man of the sea', they appear to rest on the shoulders of the rising generations. The old are unable to accept the traditional pattern which laid down the milestones of man's life—the years of a student, of a householder, of an elder and of *sanyas*; a pattern of living in which discipline and the giving up of power and securities were integral. The old are also unable to comprehend the new emergent directions, the new power relationship. They see their children and their grandchildren separated from them by a yawning gulf of knowledge, of technology, of new sexual moralities, of recreations, and areas of life and activity to which the old have no access. They also see seeming indiscipline, violence, vulgarity, chaos, disintegration. Incapable of enquiry or dialogue, too rigid and crystallised for compassionate probing and listening, the older generations see in themselves an image of stability and seek to continue to control, to demand obedience, to maintain the status quo. Essentially the old never cut the umbilical cord. Their sense of inadequacy only makes their hold more desperate. And so they accentuate the worship of leadership, both religious and political.

Is old age necessary? The body grows old, the cells deteriorate, death is the one certainty. Must the mind follow the same pattern? Growing old is the closing in of the senses, when seeing, listening, feeling diminish and the mind established in its groove continually repeats itself; a state in which action is based on backward looking movement, the looking to memory, to the past experience of the individual of the race for solution of living problems. Growing old

*From *Seminar* (**118**), June 1969.

is the incapacity to draw the past into the perceptive light of the present.

Then are the young young? Their bodies obviously are young, the years lie ahead. But the mind? So long as they too look backwards, so long as they do not question the structure and roots of the cruel, ruthless society of which they are part, so long as they battle and are satisfied to take over what the old have, the young are already old. The distance that separates them from the past generation is a distance in time; it is not a dimensional distance of mind, heart and energy. The revolt of the young in India has so far not been at the frontiers of the human situation. Their challenges are peripheral. The conflict is for the meagre spoils. This in a sense is inevitable because of the terrifying poverty, over-population and shortages of those material elements without which meaningful life is impossible. But this is equally true of the young born in affluent situations. The search, the drive, the direction is surface and material. The movement is of the old. Action, deep dimensional action, demands energy—physical and inner—and a perceptive compassionate observation. The tragedy of this country is the continuing hold on the tools and instruments of growth of those with ebbing energy. In a sense, it is the incapacity to act, and the security of the verbal position, 'the should', that is the central point of the disintegration. This is the old in manifestation. And inevitably there is increasing insecurity, terrifying alienation, hatred and violence.

Education, the milieu where the young are expected to grow, to flower and mature, to learn and to discover the tools that would equip them to question and to build, rests in the hands of tired, inadequate, faded, uneducated teachers, who can only educate in their own likeness. So, deadening mediocrity is being encouraged and perpetuated. At best our educators are concerned with imitation or revival. And revival is a word loaded with limitations. The failure to give to education the highest possible attention and priority in terms of human material and resources and the growing hold of those who are responsible for the educational apparatus on educational institutions to see that they are controlled and directed, is based on deep insecurity. What is looked for is an educational framework that will provide a mirror to existing generations, institutions that will produce young people who will not challenge the structure and postulates of the establishment, psychological or physical.

The clash of the generations, the flaring conflicts are the result of a

deeply disturbed inner equilibrium in man. Tensions are being generated by the pressure of new tools, new technology, new instruments of communication and the appalling emptiness that permeates man's inner life. The existing resources of mind and body of the young and the old are totally unequal to the strains being generated. Any educational system which is concerned with peripheral re-arrangement of existing values and mores is moving in the direction of chaos, of senseless violence, of callousness, of the abnormal becoming the norm. There is disintegration lurking in any system that hopes to maintain the status quo. Like a wave, confusions and chaos are overtaking man. There has to be fundamental revolution in the values man holds.

Is the problem one of direction? Is it one of finding a path, a way, an order within this world of growing chaos, increasing violence, insecurity, cruelty and inequality? But who knows the direction? Certainly not the old, also certainly not the young. The inability to accept the position of not knowing the way—which is the position of the tentative enquiring mind—is itself a major obstacle to discovery. For not to know is to be hesitant, to be observant, to listen and to learn. But to accept this would be to be vulnerable and no entrenched group can afford to so expose itself. Responsibility lies with the individual. To observe perceptively and compassionately and to act; this does not mean the denial of the historical processes but the refusal to be bound by these processes in decision taking. To realise that nothing is static, that the movement of life is a movement of change, that no situations are ever identical. 'The earth crust changes ceaselessly under our feet.'

To enable man to meet the crises, to be part of the contemporary stream, the contemporary culture, to establish a dialogue—not between the old structure and the emerging new—man, young or old, must move with the same pace as the stream, the same tempo and movement. There must be germination of energy, for only in germination is a culture alive and vibrant. That is only possible when the mind does not identify and cling to the past as security, when the mind does not lay claim to the fruits of its own degeneration, when the mind does not accept and take the structure of the mind and society as inevitable, when it is perceptive and acts.

In recent years two factors of significance to the human situation have been the emergence among the young of the flower children and the dynamic appearance of the young red guards. The flower

children—the wanderers of the earth—have become with their beards, their kurtas, their bare feet, a symbol. Seeking to reestablish their communion with nature and man, seeking it in drugs, in music, in travel, in yoga, in sex; anti-war, anti-competition, anti-hypocracy, anti 'the more' of acquisitive society; concerned with living and being and loving; striding continents, living in poverty and squalor, in caves and on river banks, sharing even in their failures, they have brought to the human situation a gentle anguished interval. But they too are a lost generation.

The Chinese experiment has been awesome. That millions of young people could walk out and invade the environment, is an action the significance of which should not be underestimated. The action was revolutionary and vast resources of energy and power were released. It was action that was not concerned with compassion and the element of ruthlessness inherent in it was terrifying. But it too failed. It is difficult to say why. Maybe those who unleashed the energy were themselves old and afraid when they grew aware of the implications of what they had released and withdrew before this mighty river of energy could establish directions and foundations.

Essentially the problem of gerontocracy and the widening distances between generations can only be solved by the discovery of new sources of energy. Energy has the capacity for compassionate action. Without this energy the capacity to probe, to enquire, to establish dialogue, to create new areas of inner space is not possible. Without this probing, without new spaces within man, there can be no solution that can contain and resolve the problem of the young and the old. Of fundamental importance is the asking of right questions, ceaselessly, relentlessly, without being satisfied with answers from the immediacy of experience. The old mind rarely asks fundamental questions. It is too concerned with the trivial. The young exploding mind does not argue or talk of disintegration. It explodes, is full of energy and acts. What comes in contact with it bears the impact of the exploding energy, is destroyed or germinates and lives. At the end of the day, the young mind rests having acted fully with no residue. The total action is fully done. It is the old mind that is frustrated, that is concerned and fearful of the new. That cannot bear the breaking down, the seeming chaos. That is always verbally concerned with disintegration and chaos, but always looks to others for action. Such a mind never plunges into the chaos, never gets its feel, its fragrance, its nuances. The old mind never accepts

responsibility. It closes its eyes to the fact that it is the chaos and is not separate from it.

To ask questions at depth, to challenge the structure and roots of human consciousness, society, relationships, beliefs and actions, is to throw man, young or old, back on himself and on his own inner resources. In that lies maturity. Man in himself has to discover the sacredness of life and environment. He can no longer evade that which lies within him. To understand the outer confusion and despair, he must understand his inner confusion. Clarity lies in man's capacity to contact and perceive the unknown within himself, and project not what he has perceived for that cannot be projected, but that having perceived whatever he projects will carry the impact of that space, of that energy. The doubling back on the self, the awareness of the self, is the act that creates the energy; it is the new dimension. It is to charge the dynamo. 'Birth of intelligence corresponds to a turning in on itself not only of the nervous system, but of the whole being.'

*Women**

UMA VASUDEV

It is as old-fashioned now to discuss whether women should have a home or a career as it is to question the equality between men and women. I would like to make just one clarification, however, before being misunderstood. In India, these questions apply only to urban areas and this symposium does not attempt to deal with the many-sided problems of peasant in India in which the overwhelming numbers of our women live and work. Here we are talking about women who have had a chance to education and to expression through some form of training.

I think it has been universally accepted that any intelligent woman will want a career—call it profession, occupation or hobby—outside her home, as it has been universally accepted that the intelligence quotient of the average man and woman works out to nearly the same. Physical strength is no longer really relevant for we are past the ages when it mattered much. No, the problem lies deeper, and is more insidious. I think women have been very cleverly seduced by sociological romanticism, beguiled by a centuries' long image of themselves as suffering heroines. Tell a starving man that it is spiritual and noble to starve, and see how he begins to cherish his pain! Tell a woman that 'sacrifice' is the sustaining ideal in the world, and see with what quiet passion she begins to deny herself! For that is what she has done: succumbed to the magnificent martydom of the repressed. Indian women, especially, have been taught for so long that the sanction for their existence lies only in being the vehicles of the human race and patiently accepting the indignities heaped upon them by *kismet* and their men; that they, and everybody else around them, have apparently forgotten that their first duty is to themselves as human beings with desires and ambitions, weaknesses, rights, talent, individuality and genius.

At the highest intellectual level, women are extolled at best as the

*From *Seminar* (52), December 1963.

inspirers of men, of poets and writers and statesmen and sinners turned saints. At the social level, a daughter makes a marriage on her father's riches, a wife sinks or rises according to her husband's status, a sister lives through her brother's whims and a mother on the achievements of her son. Has anyone ever asked why a social system should reserve only a vicarious satisfaction for half its members? How long is any sensitive person on his or her own expected to find fulfilment only and always through passivity? It is not that there are not any women poets, writers and statesmen, even administrators. In fact, women are now in every field. But the psychological odds against which they fight are peculiar. One has to live in a small town in India to realise how even the display of intelligence on the part of women is suspect: as if one were invading the sacred realms of the mind reserved for and ruled by men, and showing thereby a most unwomanly daring. A working woman, therefore, to my mind a truly normal woman, may be considered extraordinary and unusually tough or a victim of economic compulsion, but she remains a freak in the eyes of the majority of men, society in general and, ironically enough, in the eyes of the rest of the women who on their side remain only housewives. She is an unnatural person who has rejected the supposedly exclusive satisfaction to be derived from the more benevolent attributes of maternity and love of the home which any so-called normal woman finds sufficient for her glory.

What I would like to ask is, does this 'normal' woman really find glory in repeated maternity, and the monotonous task of washing, cleaning, cooking, looking after wailing children, naughty children, inquisitive children, even loving children, and over and above that, a man who comes home from office tired, disgruntled, itching to shed his belligerence on some scapegoat? One is reminded of the analysis of an eminent sociologist who said that even the poorest Indian male is fortunate in having opportunities for releasing his impulse to domination and the fury of his frustrated ego, because he always has a wife whom he can treat as an inferior.

Psychologically for men, it may be dramatic catharsis, but where should the women turn? I have seen the most exemplary mothers scream with exasperation after three hours of pandering to a three year old's whims, seen the most loving, long-suffering wife curse a fate which decrees an unending stream of days of deadening similarity. They are bored, sick and passionless. What prevents them from rebelling once and for all is this old belief, heavy with time and

tradition, of living up stoically to some sort of sacrificing ideal, thereby fulfilling their true woman's destiny. In this they are encouraged by our society as it is at present, by our films (which exercise the greatest outside influence on the average Indian woman), which, after the most daring deviations, and with the time-honoured moral of a woman's place is in the home, and at the *charan* of her husband (at which the audience claps with smug approval), and the religious milieu of our thought which continuously holds up the image of Sita, the faithful, unquestioning wife in the *Ramayana*, as the highest norm for Indian womanhood. There is no emphasis on any individual qualities of excellence which Sita might have possessed, barring her beauty which in any case is a physical attribute. Her sole virtue is her faithfulness, not to any wider principle or idea or universal concept, but to her husband, Ram. Now, is it not possible for any ordinary woman to be faithful to a husband she loves? Should one glorify her therefore only on the basis of the exemplary nature of her wifehood and forget what she might be like as a whole person? It seems that it is not important what a woman is like as a person, only what she is like as a wife, mother or daughter. The exalted Tulsidas had no illusions:

> *Dhor ganwaar shudra pashu nari*
> *Sab hain taran ke adhikari*
> (The moron, the shudra, cattle, animals and women are types of subservient beings).

In this respect, I would like to give an instance from a film produced in our so-called modern age in India, *Kavi Kalidas*. It typifies the dominant moral of practically every Indian film, hence the detail with which I would like to discuss it. Frankly, I do not know the autobiographical details of the poet's life—I believe there is only negligible evidence available. But the story in the film runs like this: Kalidas is an unmitigably stupid boy. A series of incidents depicting this culminate in the notorious act of a moron attributed to him as a grown man, when he is seen cutting the very branch of the tree he is sitting on. A venerated rishi, furious with the learned and scholarly Princess Udyottamma whom knowledge has turned cruelly arrogant, vows that he will teach her a lesson by tricking her into marriage with this buffoon. The rishi succeeds. Udyottamma is completely enamoured by Kali's looks, but when she discovers how she has

been tricked, she throws him out of her room on their wedding night. The rest of the story is irrelevant from my point of view except for the obvious moral which is repeatedly emphasised in the film that Udyottamma should have sacrificed herself to her husband, even though she discovered him to be an utter fool.

Even if one agrees to this in some particular instance, the generalisations which follow thickly one upon the other express the usual, orthodox and limited sensitivity. In a dramatic verbal contest, Kalidas (metamorphosised into the brilliant poet) affirms the privilege of man to gain from a variety of experience, suggesting that he is not bound by his marriage ties to Udyottamma. She (chastened, penitent and now projected as the 'ideal wife') argues that a woman on her own, like herself, has no sanctions to live and must therefore be pitied. Gone is the rational, intellectual theme of her personality. Her appeal is purely emotional and what is worse, she has to attempt a reconciliation by invoking his pity, not his love, which is reserved for another. (We must not forget, of course, that in those days there was no question of divorce or remarriage for the woman.) The only choice open to Udyottamma in the absence of her husband, would have been extramarital affairs or the life of a *brahmacharin*. As a princess, she could not afford to impair her reputation, and as a young, beautiful and volatile woman, she must have found the prospect of lifelong celibacy fairly undesirable. No wonder she was reduced to such a plight. The position of the majority of Indian women in modern India is not very different: they have hardly any choice. The law may allow it, but their courage does not, conditioned as their values have become over the years.

So much for this aspect of the ethics of Hindu society. I am sorry for using religious terms, but so long as a truly universal basis of a rational moral idea which not only cuts through hidebound religious concepts but rejects them altogether, is not formed, one is compelled to use 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' or 'Christian' for the analyses of social thought. Here is what Wilfred Cantwell Smith (*Modern Islam in India*) has to say about women in Indian Islam:

> ...the general modernised position of Indian Islam on women can be said to be decidedly conservative, with some progressive ventures which can be summed up as efforts (or pretensions) to elevate woman as a daughter, a wife and a mother, and however highly, never considers her as a person... there is no conception

> of companionship between a man and woman. It is not denied, it is simply not understood. The absolute value of a female person as an interesting, important, independent personality, with infinite potential development, is ignored. The possible relation of friendship between men and women each in their own rights as individuals, is not conceived. The only relation allowed between them is as functionaries, usually sexual functionaries; not as persons.

He says elsewhere in a paragraph which is irresistibly relevant:

> Woman in middle class Muslim society still cannot, or can hardly, live independently; if she did not subordinate herself in some way to a man, to be financially supported by him, she would in all probability starve to death. So long as such a situation persists in fact, the theoretic subjection of women in Islamic religion will continue.

I don't need to add anything to that.

So far as the West is concerned, the situation is markedly different, but the problem is the same and foreshadows what may happen if the emancipation of women is driven along set lines, that is, psychologically advanced but materially inept and the thinking on women outstrips the social and economic pattern. The suffragette movement and the Second World War liberated women from traditional prejudices, for a time. Economic freedom gave them a sense of equality with the men. They took to slacks and the crew-cut and manly mannerisms just to show that they were free of the past. They worked during the war in factories and war-plants, as pilots and soldiers and nurses, and afterwards, in every field open to them. But, the strain broke their nerves. Their freedom had won them intellectual acceptance, no doubt, but emotionally, the woman was still 'the little woman' of the home and hearth. The result was that she had to do all the household chores as well as her work outside, the emphasis being still on the former.

In Europe it is only an infinitesimal percentage of families who can afford a servant, and in spite of occasional offers of help from the men and the saving grace of modern mechanical gadgets, the burden of the same old odious tasks of washing dishes and nappies and ironing and cooking continues to rest on the women. Even in

America, creches are not so widespread as to enable the average wife to escape acting the baby-sitter for most of her time. If the woman is a normally intelligent being and normally ambitious, how should she reconcile this drudgery with her aspirations, and from where should she snatch the time to fulfil the non-maternal aspects of her personality? Once, when I was dilating upon what I consider are the tragic limitations in an intelligent woman's life with a leading educationist from the US, he turned round and said, 'But even in America, we are going back to the old ways. Women have begun to realise that they'd rather be domesticated than experiment with careers.'

Good God! Obviously. They haven't Amazonian energies. Even spiritual ambition requires physical reserves. Any hobby or occupation or profession requires time. If anybody thinks that looking after a house, without any servants, mind you, is an easy task, they should think again. It can not only be physically enervating but intellectually deadening. If a husband is not prepared to share in half the household chores, equally, the woman is invariably placed with no alternative but to give up the job she has. Whereas a man can have both marriage and a career as part of a normal social pattern, a woman can have only one of the two, unless as I said, she has extraordinary energy and is prepared to fight like the devil. For the vast majority of intelligent middle class women—it is the middle class here or in the West which bears the brunt of the dilemma—this can be nothing short of tragic.

I would like to raise another point. This 'love of home' as exclusively applicable to women is overdone and somewhat misunderstood. It should be qualified by 'the love of an independent home', which a man cherishes as much. The only difference is that a man can have an independent home as soon as he begins working, the woman only when she marries. As a daughter, no matter how spoilt, she is still dependent, as a sister too and as a mother. But as a wife she reigns as the supreme mistress of the house, hence her pride and her attachment to it. If she strives for an 'independent' home while unmarried, she has to be prepared for a markedly low economic standard, for the majority of jobs available to women, in India at least, are not highly paid, and the frowns of a society which tends to look down on a lone woman. The problem of living becomes acute for what one might call the upper class or upper middle class woman. As a typist, stenographer, receptionist, radio announcer

(slightly more 'U') or model, she can on her own set up house only on lower middle class lines, and nothing as near to what she may have been used to. Though entry in the professional, more affluent jobs like those in firms or as engineers or even in government service is not denied to her, she hesitates to train for them.

It is here that we come up against another stumbling block. For, even the most ambitious women know that at the very height of their careers, if they marry, more often than not they will have to give up their jobs. Not necessarily because their husbands want them to, but because of the compulsions of a social pattern, which very seldom provides that a husband and wife should be able to pursue their independent careers in the same town. (Though a gentleman very gallantly did tell me once, 'It depends on who has the better job, the husband or the wife. I'd give up mine if she were earning more!' I do not think more than one in a million would do it. And if they had to, it would be just as tragic for them.) If a woman is posted in one town, the husband will be in another and so on and only a fitful adjustment between the two whereby they spend their respective holidays with each other may keep the marriage going. Anticipating such a future, and knowing that it is she who will have to give it up, even a serious minded young girl cannot devote herself to a profession with the dedicated zeal which a lifetime's occupation demands. It is this inability to concentrate because of the uncertainty of being able to pursue the particular job in future which gives to a woman a certain professional frivolousness of attitudes. One can hardly blame her but this forms the subject of many a male joke at her expense!

Official inconsideration does not help matters. Take the case of our foreign service. Although government allows women candidates there is a stipulation that in the event of their marriage they must resign immediately. This may be a subtle way of discouraging women candidates at the very outset for government knows that when such women officers get married they resign in any case and the money spent on their training is entirely wasted. But look at it from another angle. Once women resign and their marriages don't work out—it is known to happen—they are left suspended, sometimes with a child to look after. After being used to a position of authority and influence such as the IFS and IAS may give, it is even more difficult for such women to stoop to jobs which, in the majority of cases, are

only good enough to serve girls as stop-gap occupations after college and before marriage.

Consistent with the fact that marriages are no longer so 'sacred' and unbreakable as before, with the desire of women for an intelligent and not merely functional participation in society, and with the progressive changes which are visible in other spheres of modern society, two more changes seem vitally necessary. One is what Geoffrey Gorer suggested in a recent article on women, the overall change in the policy of government and other institutions as well as in the attitudes of men and women, to accommodate the social and economic pattern to the 'life-rhythms' of women also: this means providing jobs and refresher training courses for women after forty or earlier when they are free of child-bearing and rearing responsibilities (till such time as Huxley's 'brave new world' does not assume total scientific reality and babies are born in test tubes!), keeping in view the fact that women, having a longer life span than men, would still be able to harness a considerable number of years into the service of society.

The second, which is really a corollary and has immediate practical relevance, that institutions and government and private employers must show more understanding towards the requests of a husband or a wife to be allowed to work in the same place, instead of displaying the irritation or cussedness which they are wont to do. Unless the institution of marriage itself suffers a radical change, the position of a working man or woman—so far, only the woman—who is forced to a choice between a place and a loved one, becomes absolutedly anomalous. So long as social ethics demand that it is the woman who must give up her career, the more intelligent among them will be the most to suffer, with the lucky exceptions of writers, doctors and social welfare workers who find it easy to transplant their activities profitably to any environment. This of course is applicable to the middle class women who have had the opportunity and inclination to pursue a profession. What of those who comprise the vast number of our lower middle class and peasant women. They are married off and have a life of hard servitude before them—inevitable, so it seems. But is it? Why cannot part-time education leading to part-time occupation be promoted and provided. In this context, women could play a vital role in the plans—in providing necessary consumer articles apart from teaching, nursing and social service.

There is another point which requires thoughtful analysis, unblanketed by any preconceived notions. That is, the fetish that has been made of the creative aspects of biological reproduction. How fulfilling is motherhood? On what level of experience? Can you justify an entire life of arrested mental development on the grounds that you have done your primary duty by bearing a child? Is a woman who has produced twelve children a greater artist than the one who has produced only two? What name would you give to that 'creative fulfilment' which makes a prolific village mother glad that some of her children die because she can't look after them anyway? It follows that to settle motherhood as an all-fulfilling passion for women is to reduce them to the instinctual level, i.e., to have them derive their satisfactions from the instincts only, in this case even inferior to the animal world which does the same thing more naturally, with less pain and purer elemental joy. We have to distinguish between various grades of creativity, specially between the physical and the mental. Motherhood is primarily, not entirely, but primarily physical; its fundamental aim has been understood to be to externalise physical existence. It is possible therefore to accept only that mother to be truly creative who through her love of her child, grasps the very concept of love itself and relates it to other relationships and other problems. Her child would be a means to a higher understanding of the world around. But that would make her a creative human being, not just a creative mother.

Our greatest problem is that even the field of creativity for women is limited to the domestic sphere. If you are above average, well, you can be a better mother or a better wife or a better daughter than merely mother, wife or daughter. This means that you can, with impunity, be blind to universal ideas; in love with, and contributing to, the immediate family circle, you are expected to just stop thinking. Their attributes being compartmentalised thus, for the vast majority of women, their instinctual body blooms, but how the mind sags! The ultimate resort is not even to religion, but to superstition.

Even the most 'liberated' of men, therefore, who are subconsciously motivated stillto subscribe to the existing pattern, find it difficult to accommodate an intelligent woman on equal terms into their intellectual milieu. As a sensitive young woman friend pointed out to me, the general attitude of men in not crediting women with any seriousness of thought, is reflected in an obvious social habit,

minor but significant, in mixed parties and gatherings. 'They never address you (the women) directly in any discussion of any consequence', she says. Not only that. In middle class masculine thinking, if a woman is 'interesting' or 'intelligent' or active in a non-domestic sphere so that they are obliged to view her independently of her symbolic representation as wife, mother, daughter, she immediately acquires an exciting, *risque*, potentiality. The average male mind in India, I think, equates the modern, intelligent working woman with the courtesan of old. This is a psychological association which must really be counteracted at the deepest level.

Lastly, if civilisation means the progressive rejection of the mundane from everyday existence, and the seeking after a Utopian luxury and quality of experience, why should not the women be allowed to share in the excitement of the quest? As Ezra Pound says:

Go, my songs, to the lonely and the unsatisfied
Go also to the nerve-wracked, go to the enslaved-by-convention,
Speak against unconscious oppression,
Speak against the tyranny of the unimaginative
Speak against the bonds
Go to the bourgeois who is dying of her ennuis
Go to the women in the suburbs
Go to the hideously wedded
Go to them whose failure is concealed,
Go to the unluckily mated,
Go to the bought wife,
Go to the woman entailed.
Go out and defy opinion
Go against this vegetable bondage of the blood
Be against all sorts of mortmain.

*Regionalism**

M. RUTHNASWAMY

As substantial a thesis can be made on the differences between North and South as on those between East and West. North and South on the surface of the globe as a whole, as well as in each country, have faced each other in difference if not in opposition. The South has within the time of recorded history experienced a milder, warmer climate and has preceded the North in civilisation and culture, in agriculture, the manual and the fine arts, in literature, in religion. This is proved by the history of Asia, or Europe, or America, or even Africa. It is proved in the history of each country, from England to China, in France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Russia, Persia, Mesopotamia, India and also in the USA. It is from the South in each continent and each country that civilisation and culture have gone to the North—as the sap in a tree rises from the roots to the trunk and the branches and the leaves.

From the North have come conquest, power, unification and empire. Here, again, climate and soil may have had much to do with the processes of history. Cold, the long winters, infertility of soil, may have led the peoples from the North to descend to the South and by superior physical power gather to themselves the fruits of civilisation and culture and the arts which their relatively unfavourable climate and soil could not give them. These historical facts are repeated in India.

Not only geologically, but historically, the South is the more ancient part of India. The peoples of the South have been comprehensively described as Dravidians. Whether they were autochthonous or settlers from the North-West or North-East they were *in situ* and in possession when the Aryans descended on them. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* have references to their civilisation and culture, to their cities, their palaces (like that of Ravana) and their luxurious life. Certain religious ceremonies current even today testify

*From *Seminar* (23), July 1961.

to their rulership in antiquity. At Tiruvarur, in the district of Tanjore, the headman of the Paraiyans (the pariahs of modern times) is mounted on the elephant with an image of Siva at the time of the god's festival and carries the *chowri*, showing that the Dravidian people were the rulers of these parts—an antiquity which precedes the foundation of the historical dynasties of the Cholas and the Pandyas. The *Tolkapprian*, even if it dates back only to the first century B.C. or the first century A.D., must on account of its systematic, scientific, developed character have been preceded by centuries of literary development. The Dravidian temple in its maturity marks the fulfilment of an ancient culture.

The marriage of Aryan and Dravidian civilisations and culture shows that the difference between the North and the South need not be great or lasting. What has happened between North and South in India has happened between North and South elsewhere. In England, the agriculture of the South has been married to the industry of the North; in France, the civilisation of the South derived from Rome has been brought under the power and government of the North; the southern States of Germany have contributed largely to the cultural progress of Germany, and the union of North and South, achieved only in recent times, has contributed to the strength of modern Germany; this has happened also in Italy; and in the USA, a civil war was waged to confirm the federal unity of the country and permit its further development. The era of what is sometimes described as 'reconciliation' and 'reconstruction', which followed the end of the Civil War in the USA, shows in certain respects how the differences between North and South and the consequent mutual fears and suspicions, may be smoothed out in India. Apart from the treatment of the slaves in the southern States, which would have no relevance to circumstances elsewhere, the Federal Government from 1867 onwards, despite considerable bitterness and suspicion, did attempt to implement a programme of economic reconstruction in the South. An extensive plan for the building of roads and bridges was carried out; the great plantations were split into smaller holdings; attempts were made to assure the prosperity of the farmers, including emancipated negroes.

By 1880, the old area of cotton production was regained, and by 1900 the pre-Civil War figures were more than doubled. A textile industry was established in the South which had not known it before, and by 1900 it possessed about 2 million spindles and was beginning

to challenge New England's position in the home market. The tobacco industry was also expanded in North Carolina and Virginia. The discovery of coal and iron deposits in Tennessee and Alabama led to the foundation of an iron industry in the South. But it has been noted by an American writer[1] that 'a price the South pays for its progressive industrialisation is increasing servitude to northern capital'; the great financial houses of New York city control most of the region's strategic industries. While the southern industries, owned and controlled by outsiders, include the region's railroads, its coalfields, its iron resources and its electric power, gas and oil resources, manufacture in the South is confined mainly to the elementary processes. The South fabricates its own cast-iron pipes, steel rods, bridges and oils but not its hardware, locomotives and automobiles. This disparity between the North and the South has, however, been reduced by the industrial developments of the Roosevelt-Truman administration during and after the last war. Indeed, it is even believed by some US economists that the levying of huge federal income taxes according to the ability to pay, and the expenditure or their revenues according to the degree of human need, mean a shift of investment from the wealthier North to the poorer South.

Another example for India to follow, and one more within her capacity to follow, is Italy. Here, the South is much more depressed than it was in the USA, or even in India. We need not go into the historical causes of the neglect of the South by the governments of the Risorgimento. They were busy with the parliamentary processes of democratic liberalism and concerned with the operations of economic *laissez-faire*. The North, on account of its natural resources and its adventurous industrialists forged ahead. With the departure of the King of Naples from the capital of the kingdom, the importance of Naples as the financial and marketing centre of southern Italy and Sicily declined and with it all hope of attracting capital to build railways and industries in the South. The handicrafts of southern Italy could not compete with the factory-made goods of the North, the exploitation of the forest and mineral resources of the South fell into the hands of northerners with political influence who, according to Professor Colin Clark,[2] did not make use of them as they might have done to develop local industry and employment.

[1]F. B. Simkins, in a paper entitled 'Regionalism in America', University of Minnesota Press, 1951.

[2]In an article in the *Tablet*, 26 October 1957.

Thus the 'outstanding poverty and unemployment' of southern Italy is accounted for.

Even the fascist regime did nothing to improve conditions in the South. In the new Italy of the Christian Democratic Front, although the North is maintaining its industrial pre-eminence, the discrepancy between the North and the South is gradually being narrowed. Industrialists from the North are, for various reasons, establishing their new plants in the South. The economic programmes of the ruling party in Italy also provide for the splitting up of the huge landed estates in southern Italy into small peasant proprietorships. The latest of these plans provides for a 10 years' economic development programme aiming at finding 4,000,000 new jobs in Italy by 1965, to balance the Italian economy and to raise the standard of living in southern Italy.

Similar plans and programmes for the economic development of the South are necessary here in India. For here also dissatisfaction and discontent have been rife for the past 10 years, at least in regard to the industrial treatment of the South by the North—so much so that it finds expression in mass movements like the Dravida Kazhagam and its more politically active successor, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Their common title of Dravida gives the key to their objective. It is the formation of an independent State called Dravidistan. They and their critics are agreed in limiting the area of the South to the area of the States and peoples speaking the four Dravidian languages. The popularity of the movement cannot be doubted. Both the Kazhagams attract huge masses of people to their meetings and the organisations get financial support from the *paisas* of the poor. With these collections, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, the leader of Dravida Kazhagam, has been able to build an impressively large house of hospitality and activity for his followers. His papers are financially self-supporting. So are those of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Its leader, C. N. Annadurai, and each of his chief lieutenants, has a paper of his own which gets mass support from the members and is a financial success; each of them on account of his fluency in popular Tamil is able to keep large audiences spell-bound for hours.

The DMK (to use the popular abbreviation) has secured considerable successes. At the last general elections it was able to win 15 seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly and 2 in the Legislative Council. It won a majority in the last municipal elections in the city

of Madras and the Madras Corporation has had DMK Mayors for three successive years. The party has secured a foothold among the masses, especially in the towns. Although its slogan of Dravidistan has found no echo in any other State of Dravidanad—Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh or Kerala—it would not be practical politics to despise any mass movement however ill-founded its creed. Not for the first time has a mass movement of sentiment found widespread favour in India. And the DMK has a case especially as in its propaganda speeches and meetings it takes care to speak of the South rather than of Dravidistan. For it knows that a case can be made out for the dissatisfaction which the South feels at the hands of a government dominated by the North. In a Cabinet of 13, there are 10 from the North and only 2 from the South, and out of 13 ministers of State there are only 2 from the South. While the proportion of members of Parliament from the South may be justified by population, it cannot be maintained that a population of 85 millions deserves only a representation of 4 ministers in a Ministry of 26—especially in view of the educational and political advance of the people of the South.

The DMK, speaking on behalf of the South, cannot put up with the fact that Uttar Pradesh with 10 per cent literacy should be given as many as 7 places in a Ministry of 26. In the Planning Commission, which has become a super-government, out of 9 there are only 2 members from the South. Out of 20 Secretaries there are only about 5 from the South. The North may say that this is mere passion and prejudice. But, popular passion and prejudice have to be taken into account in political judgements in a democracy—particularly one with universal adult suffrage in a population which is 75 per cent illiterate. It is on account of this political and administrative dominance of the North that the South feels it does not get as much in developmental programmes and expenditure as it ought to. In the Second Plan outlay, out of a total of 2,240 crores for the whole of India, the southern States got 521 crores. All the three new steel works—Rourkela, Bhilai and Durgapur—are in the North. Even the proposal to set up a steel alloys plant at Bhadravati in Karnataka was turned down in favour of Durgapur. The Neyveli Lignite Project is a solitary attempt to establish heavy industries (steel now included) in the South—but it will take time, and its success depends on the successful solution of the ground-water problem in the region.

More bitterly resented in the South than the industrial policy of the Government of India is its language policy. Despite the concessions made to the agitation in the South by allowing English to co-exist with Hindi as the official language for an indefinite period, or at least till the South voluntarily accepts Hindi as the official language, the determined policy of the Government of India is to make Hindi eventually the official language of the country. The section in the Constitution making Hindi the official language of India has not been amended. Its operation has been cushioned to the extent that Hindi is not to be the sole official language, but that it is to ride in tandem for some time with English. Meanwhile, a dead set is to be made by official pressure, by grants, inducements, by awards and official promotion to make Hindi spread rapidly in use among officials and candidates for office and in schools and colleges. The funds of the Government of India, contributed by the South as by the North, are used to finance the measures to make Hindi the official language as soon as possible.

This imposition of Hindi by the North is resented in the South. Hindi is only one of the languages of India. It cannot compete in history, or development, or competence, with any of the Dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada. It is spoken, even if all its dialects are taken together, by only about 50 millions out of a population of 360 millions (calculations are based on the 1951 Census). The Hindi policy of the Government of India under its present leadership is, in the opinion of the South, sheer imperialism and as Hindi imperialism it is denounced on the platform and in the press. The South would prefer English to continue as the language of government and administration—as against Hindi. As for the argument that nowhere in the world is a foreign language the language of government and administration, the reply is that nowhere in the world are there such political and linguistic conditions and circumstances as in India.

A country with fourteen major languages, all of them with a long history, and most of them illustrated by a rich literature and tuned to modern requirements, each of them spoken by a score of millions, is unique in the world. Why, people in the South ask, should not each of them be made the language of national government and administration as in Switzerland which uses each of the languages of the people (French, German, Italian, and even Romanche spoken only by 20,000 people). If fourteen is said to be too large a, number

it cannot be too large for India which is about ten times the size of Switzerland with a population about seven times greater.

Not because the Hindi policy of the Government of India stands by itself, but because it is part of a general exhibition of centralised power administered from New Delhi, the people in the South as represented in recent political movements (DK, DMK, and the new Swatantra Party) ask for the autonomy given them by the Constitution to be exercised in full. In spite of the Concurrent List, the States are expected under the Constitution to exercise the largest measure of self-government consistent with the political unity of the country. That political unity is secured by the allocation to the subjects of defence, national security, foreign affairs, trade and commerce, national communications and national welfare. All the rest—education, health, agriculture and industry—are in the keeping of the State Governments. The Concurrent List gives the Centre the right to intervene in regard to those subjects which are primarily and principally the concern of the States only in those rare instances where the national interest would be served. That is the principle and law of the Constitution. But in practice the fact that the same party rules in the States as at the Centre, that the State governments are badly off financially, and because they threw away, for a theory, the substantial revenue from excise on the sale of liquor, and now implement extensive policies imposed upon them from the Centre, most of them live as poor relations of the Government of India.

And then there is the Planning Commission, a body unknown to the Constitution, created by a fiat of the Government of India, producing plans galore because it has the power to produce plans without the responsibility of rearing them. State governments have to dance attendance on the Commission for any modification of the proposals though it is they who have to find the money (with or without help from the Centre) and assume responsibility for all the political and economic consequences which may result.

The fissiparous tendencies in the country fostered by linguistic States, North-South tensions, cultural and religious diversities cannot be assuaged by a powerful central government. Restraint, limitation, concentration on the few possible aims rather than on the many desirable ambitions are necessary for the strength of governments as for the strength of individuals. It is in the direction of strengthening all unifying influences that the hopes of dissolving tensions in India lie. A strong central government is a great asset given us by the

Con·titution, honouring the legacy of British rule—something all previous centuries of Indian history lacked. This asset should not be dissipated by the Centre by frittering away money and energy on subjects such as education, health and agriculture which are, according to the Constitution, the primary and principal concern of the States. As the only work the Centre does in these subjects is to organise the giving of grants and subsidies to State governments, this organisation could be entrusted to a single department called the Department of National Welfare, saving the country a crore or two on the coast of civil administration and also reducing much of the 'waste work' in which the central departments of education, health, agriculture and industry indulge in the shape of committees, circulars, memoranda, tapering off into mischievous suggestions such as evening university classes and correspondence courses in arts subjects.

Over and above the influence of government must be the unifying influence of culture. The history of India reveals a tendency towards the marriage of cultures—Aryan and Dravidian, Brahmin and Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim, and now Indian and European. This new Indian culture, the result of the evolution of centuries, must be fostered as the culture of India, the culture which must be taught in the home, in the school, in the university, in the press and on the radio.

The instrument of this new common culture of India is English. It is English which has been not only the latest instrument of that culture, but the carrier of that culture all over India. Place must be found for it in all grades of education. The first place may be given to the mother tongue, but a substantial place must be found for English in all curricula. It should start at least in the fourth year of the primary school, after a solid foundation has been laid in the mother tongue. At the secondary and university stage it should occupy at least one third of the time. This common core of English, studied in schools and university colleges in India, will produce a body of educated people, a growing body, as literacy and education spread, that will know, understand and feel bound to one another. This common core of English studies acting as the propagator of the new common culture of India will overcome the dividing tendencies of the languages and religions of India.

For the cementing of the unity of India, more solid and substantial than this common culture, is one which is more ancient than language or religion or culture. It is the land of India. The love of the

land is a sure foundation and source of patriotism. The histories of England, France, Spain and Italy are there to underline it. And two world wars have proved it 'in fire and blood'. The English on the one side and the Russian on the other in the last war put out their superior effort against the foe to deny him access to their sacred soil. And it is this love of the land that must be cultivated and reared in India as the most solid and lasting support of the unity of India.

Love for the land of India, its soil, its mountains and seas, its rivers, its forests, must be made to possess every man and woman in India. At home and in school, in offices and public places and buildings, with maps and pictures of India and its scenery, the form and shape of the country must be presented to the people every hour of their lives. The geography of India must be taught in detail in our schools and colleges. Poets should sing its praises, following the lead of Rabindranath Tagore, with his beautiful litany of the rivers in *Jana Gana Mana*, painters should paint its landscape, magazines and papers should with their photographic illustrations keep its varied beauties ever before our eyes. This love must become the supreme secular love of the people; one which may conquer the other false, sectional loves that trouble the soul of India. It is this love of our land which may cast out present-day fears and tensions. Remember what the sage of the *Rig Veda* said to the dead: 'Go to the Earth, the mother, she can save thee from nothingness.'

*Communalism**

M. S. A. RAO

There are several major religious groups in India. All the major groups are divided into a number of sects. Associations are formed on that basis. Associations are also formed on the basis of caste loyalties to promote the interests of their members. Such associations will have usually a programme of work which includes educational, medical, philanthropic and other welfare and cultural activities. So long as they do not seek the active support of the State and so long as they do not compete for power and press their claims, through political action, which have implications for the criteria of differential allocation of power (in any form), they do not come under the curse of communalism. Also, they should not be motivated by antagonism towards other groups. From this point of view, the State's active support to and the movement of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Backward Classes are expressions of ideas well within the scope of communalism because the basis of preferential treatment is membership of certain castes. Another consideration in identifying a situation of communalism is the distinction between its spirit and form. When the form of expression of communal ideas is misleading, the spirit should be of prime consideration. For example, the Punjabi Suba movement is not communal but linguistic in form and yet it is highly communal in spirit.

There are certain obvious expressions of communal ideas in our Constitution whatever might be their possible justification. First, the Constitution gives rights of representation to the Anglo-Indians in the Union Parliament and the State legislatures. Second, the Constitution guarantees certain privileges to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Backward Classes with respect to educational facilities, reservation in services and reservation of seats in the Union Parliament and the State legislatures. A whole commission is set up to look after this section of the population. These provisions have

*From *Seminar* (24), August 1961.

certain repercussions of a communal nature. There is a keen competition among castes to enter the lists of Backward Classes because they benefit by doing so. The Ahirs and Gujjars of Delhi, whose economic status is on a par with that of the Jats, are included under Backward Classes while the Jats are excluded. In Karnataka, Lingayats and other castes which are economically well-off are included under Backward Classes. Thus, the provisions of the Constitution encourage political activities of castes which organise themselves to fight for their claims through agitation. This leads to communal tensions and competitions.

Caste has come to occupy an important place in the political life of our country. One caste is set against another in the race for political power and economic and educational spoils. In Andhra Pradesh, the Kammas and Reddis are the two largest non-Brahmin rival groups. In Karnataka, a keen rivalry exists between the Okkaligas and the Lingayats. The rival Hindu groups in Kerala are the Nayars and Ezhavas.

In the South, excluding Kerala, there is a well-developed anti-Brahmin movement with a historical depth. The Justice Party was founded in 1917 in Tamilnadu to promote the interests of non-Brahmins. The Dravida Kazhagam (DK) is the follower of the Justice Party. It was founded in 1945 by E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker. A split occurred and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was founded in 1949. This Dravidian movement is essentially a protest against Brahmins, or the entire Hindu Social Order. It is also a challenge to the alleged North Indian economic and linguistic imperialism. At the present moment there is again a split in the DMK. E.V.K. Sampath has resigned along with some 20,000 members to form the Tamil National Party (Tamizhar Desiya Katchi). The anti-Brahmin policies are ably followed in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In every walk of life, such as education and employment opportunities, non-Brahmins enjoy privileges over the Brahmins. The non-Brahmin movement was and is also vigorous in Maharashtra. The conflict not only hinges on the polarisation of Brahmin and non-Brahmin castes, but also on the cleavage of upper and lower non-Brahmin castes. The Ramanathapuram riots provide an example of violent conflicts between the Harijans and the upper castes. All these are examples of communal ideas and expressions where antagonism is based on caste. Let us see how antagonism is based on religious considerations.

After the partition of the country into India and Pakistan in 1947, it was expected that the Hindu-Muslim communal disturbances would end. But the recent violent rioting in Jabalpur has shown that they are still prevalent. Such disturbances have also occurred in parts of Pakistan. Formerly, antagonism based on sectarian cleavages within the Hindu society was of common occurrence. Some of the historical examples are the keen battle between the Saivites and Vaishnavites. The militant Veerasaiva movement in Karnataka persecuted the Jains to the coastal regions. In modern times such conflicts are of rare occurrence. But other forms of antagonisms based on religion have emerged. The Dravida Kazhagam movement is anti-Sanskritic or anti-Aryan. It indulges in burning the effigies of Rama and the sacred scriptures of the Hindus.

The Indian political life is full of communal political parties. First, let me discuss the communal bases of the formation of political parties. The well-known examples are: the Hindu Mahasabha and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh at the all-India level. The Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha has for its object the promotion of Hindu culture and the establishment of Hindu Rashtra. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh too has the Hindu religion as its basis. At the State level the number of communal political parties is much larger.

The Muslim League was formulated in the thirties. It attained its avowed aim of establishing a separate State of Pakistan in 1947. But even after this, the Muslim League has been active in Kerala. It won 8 seats in the Kerala Assembly in 1957 and 11 in 1959. The Muslim League which is effective in Kerala is not without its counterparts in other regions of India. This is underlined by some aspects of the recent Convention of the Muslims in New Delhi. The Akali Dal is a party of the Sikhs in the Punjab with political activities. The Ramarajya Parishad, which is confined to Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bombay, is based on orthodox Hinduism. It was politically active in the first general elections. The Scheduled Castes Federation was founded by B. R. Ambedkar to fight for the rights and privileges of the Scheduled Castes. It is active and effective in Maharashtra. This party is based not on religion but on caste. The Garo National Council is the party of the Garos of Assam and is confined to that State. But of all the political parties of the tribes in India, the Jarkhand Party is the most powerful. It is agitating for a separate State comprising certain parts of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

To this list of full-fledged communal political parties, a few religious and caste groups should be added. In Kerala, besides the Muslim League there are other communal organisations which operate through wider political parties. They are the Catholic Congress, the Nair Service Society and the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP Yogam) of the Ezhavas. The NSS is largely with the Congress Party. Recently there is a move to make the SNDP Yogam a separate political organisation. The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) is a militant communal organisation based on Hinduism. It is only apparently non-political, being allied to the Jana Sangh.

The communal character of the political parties is thus evident by looking into the basis of their formation. Sometimes the communal basis is direct and open. But more often the communal character of the politically active groups will be latent and shrouded under non-communal garbs.

The growth of caste associations with political roles has been discussed by G. S. Ghurye[1] and by M. N. Srinivas.[2] More recently Seling S. Harrison has devoted an entire chapter of his book[3] to a discussion of the new caste lobbies. L. I. and S. H. Rudolf[4] have analysed the political role of India's caste associations. ('The Political Role of India's Caste Associations', P.A. 1960.) They illustrate this with reference to a caste association in Tamilnadu, namely, the Vanniyar or Vanniya Kula Kshatriyas. As this provides a typical example of how caste associations develop, I shall briefly summarise it.

As early as 1833, the Pallis (agricultural labourers) refused to accept their caste status. Anticipating the census in 1871, they petitioned to be classified as Kshatriyas. They had mythologies claiming descent from the Pallava dynasty. They held conferences and published books and pamphlets appealing to caste patriotism. They were interested in securing educational facilities, places in the civil service and Congress tickets. They formed a political party called

[1]G.S. Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1957.

[2]M.N. Srinivas, 'Caste in Modern India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 16 August 1957.

[3]Seling S. Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1965.

[4]L.I. and S.H. Rudolf, 'The Political Role of India's Caste Associations', *Pacific Affairs*, 1960.

the 'Tamilnad Toilers' Party' in 1951. Later there was a split based on differences of opinion between two leaders. The second party called itself 'The Common Weal Party'. Ultimately both the parties merged with the Congress after successfully bargaining for their claims, including positions in the ministry. In Rajasthan, the Kshatriya Mahasabha of the Rajputs played a similar role. It campaigned for the Congress after securing some concessions on land reforms.

These instances reveal three things. First, the caste associations may apparently have non-caste names. Second, they may contest separately in the elections or support wider political parties should their avowed claims be accepted in the educational, economic, welfare and ministerial realms. Third, the non-communal national parties have a strong tendency to put up candidates who have the solid support of their locally dominant and numerically preponderant castes. Even the Communist Party has the criterion of the 'social base' in giving tickets to its candidates.

Another expression of communalism is the way in which an electoral alliance is forged. The most glaring example of this is found in Kerala. The PSP (Praja Socialist Party) started it first in the 1957 general elections when it aligned with the Muslim League. The Congress walked into the fold later when it virtually led the Congress-PSP-League opposition against the Communist Government. Then, again, the Communist Party had an alliance with the Dravida Kazhagam in Tamilnadu in 1951. Such alliances not only support and encourage communal political parties and groups, but the non-communal parties so aligned are themselves forced to accommodate communal considerations. These are expressions of communal ideas at the level of institutions, associations and organisations. One should admit that there are subtler forms of expressions of communal ideas which do not escape the notice of a shrewd observer. A cursory examination of personnel in the management of many industrial concerns reveals that they favour only certain castes or religious groups.

I have now shown various manifestations of communal ideas in the present-day Indian society. I have also illustrated how these expressions differ in intensity and form. On the basis of the data presented above we may discuss the factors in the growth of communalism. Suggestions for combating communalism may then be seen against this background.

Although the growth of communal ideas has a deeper historical dimension, the British system of administration played an important part in encouraging casteist and communal feelings. Let me highlight a few important aspects. The British established a system of communal electorates which had for its basis strong organisations of castes and religious groups. The religious minority groups became fully conscious of their claims. They took on new political roles. Communal ideas also found expression in the recruitment of personnel to the army. Rajputs, Marathas, Gurkhas and Sikhs were given preference. A certain number of jobs were reserved for lower caste members. Anglo-Indians had certain privileges.

The system of census gave opportunities for the lower caste to assert a higher status in the caste hierarchy by having honourable titles and claiming decent mythological origins. The urban ways of living placed at the disposal of these caste and communal organisations modern means of propaganda and effective political techniques to fight for their demands. Modern means of communication increased the social space of caste associations by cutting across territorial ties. Thus, casteist and religious groups with political activities became an important feature of the Indian social structure by the beginning of the twentieth century. With the changes in the traditional social structure due to industrialisation, economic development, modern urbanisation, educational awakening and reformatory movements, the lower strata of the population made significant efforts to fight for privileges. In this process, they wanted to take revenge on the upper strata which had subjugated them for a long time.

In independent India, after the Partition, most of the policies of the British have been continued, although the system of communal electorates has been abolished. The Constitution provides for the reservation of seats to the Anglo-Indians, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The rise of another category of privileged Backward Classes has contributed to competition and conflict among the castes. The Union Government further has not taken action against the anti-Brahmin policies pursued by the ruling party in a few States. Another major factor in the growth and expression of communal ideas is the development of a series of movements within Hinduism to counteract the activities of the Muslims. The Hindu Mahasabha and the militant Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh were the organisations set up in opposition to the Muslim League.

With the ushering in of adult suffrage, a few caste and religious groups have formed separate political parties in a bid to achieve political power. A few others operate through wider political parties. Thus, the communal electorates, which directly fought in the elections under British rule, are now fighting through national and non-communal political parties. The national political parties in turn look to the strongly organised caste associations for stout and solid support for the candidates contesting under their party banner. As a matter of fact, the very distribution of tickets frequently takes place on the basis of mutual agreement about the benefits the caste associations would derive, and the probable number of votes that the caste associations in different constituencies would be able to secure for the party candidates. Hence there is a symbolic relationship between the two which ultimately encourages the political activities of caste and religious associations. Under such circumstances which loom large, the apparently non-communal parties have duly acquired a communal basis.

It is important to note in this context that the caste and religious associations have a positive role to play in the life of our country. They provide social security under the changing conditions influenced greatly by economic development and modern urbanisation. The traditional forms of localised caste councils are no longer efficient to meet the new demands. The democratic social system is making new demands on the traditional political structure, where political action was channelled through institutions of castes and religion. They are still the basis for the distribution of, and the struggle for, power. It takes a considerable time to evolve political parties based on 'rational' interests with economic, political and social programmes purged of a communal character. The electorate is largely politically illiterate and uneducated. The caste associations are functioning to interpret democracy to the rural population through the familiar idioms of caste and religion as Rudolfs remarks.[5] But there is a danger of the perpetuation of the spirit of communalism along with its function of linking the rural electorate with the wider parties. To combat communalism at its root, therefore, these roles played by the caste and religious associations should be performed by non-communal voluntary organisations.

The present basis of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and

[5]Ibid., p. 8.

Backward Classes for differential privileges should give way to objective criteria such as land and income, thereby removing the caste reference altogether. All administrative policies favouring one group over another should not be based on membership of caste. This would include reservations of seats in the legislatures, and in educational institutions.

Legislative attempts to curb communalism have certain limitations. The first reaction of the communal bodies to legislation that can be anticipated would be to change the communal name into a non-communal one and to assert that they are not communal by showing some instances of non-communal action. For instance, the Muslim League in Kerala declares that it is not a communal organisation and says in support of this that one of its eleven members is a Harijan. Such techniques of concealing the communal spirit are quite old. Given the present state of corruption in the administrative set-up, the implementation of any legislative measure to combat communalism would be at a standstill. This is especially so when the ruling party in a few States is itself a party to communalism and when the individuals seeking party tickets are certain to win elections on the basis of castes or communal support. But this is no reason why suitable legislation should not be passed to attack communalism in various forms and shades. To make the legislation more effective, tribunals should be established to try the relevant cases.

The non-communal political parties should not take the help of communal bodies, either in fighting the elections or in determining the distribution of tickets. Electoral alliances with communal parties or bodies should be condemned. The declaration of the PSP to give more tickets to Sudras and Scheduled Castes or Tribes in the coming elections has again a communal basis. It should be avoided. Fighting communalism is not a monopoly of any one party. It should become a common issue where all the non-communal political parties should unite and evolve uniform policies and action to fight communalism.

*Caste**

SURINDAR SURI

The caste system is the characteristic feature of Indian society. All levels of social and individual behaviour are influenced by it. Yet, there is no agreed definition of a caste or sub-caste any more than there is agreement among scholars on its origin, history or future. Professor D. N. Majumdar pointed out: 'The complex nature of the caste structure is evident from the fact that, after a century of painstaking and meticulous research in the history and function of the social system, we do not possess yet a valid explanation of the circumstances that might have contributed to the formation and development of this unique system. There are today as many theories of the caste origins as the number of those who have written on it. Yet, it must be admitted that no social institution except totemism has been studied from such varied angles as the caste system.'[1] It is a paradox that the caste system is all-pervasive, yet so hard to define. The need to define the caste system does not arise for the orthodox Hindu: it is something so traditional as to be self-evident. To approach a tradition intellectually is to criticise it. If one begins to analyse, define and discuss a tradition, it may be weakened; in any case, it will be altered. In India the caste system is accepted without question. The emancipated just discard it without inquiring what it is which they have given up.

There are two poles of the caste system around which it arranges itself like a magnetic field. On the top are the Brahmins and at the bottom the untouchables. Viewed from the top, the Hindu community is divided into Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The Brahmins are the only pure caste. The ranking of the other castes and subcastes depends upon the relation in which they stand to the Brahmins. Thus the major line of division in the caste system is that between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In 1931 there were about fifteen million

*From *Seminar* (70), June 1965.

[1]D.N. Majumdar, *Caste and Community in an Indian Village*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958, p. 284.

Brahmins in the whole of India, constituting one-sixteenth of the total Hindu population. Their proportion among the Hindus has been declining steadily over the years. One reason why the upper castes have fewer children is the strong stricture against widow remarriage.

If we examine the geographical distribution of castes, it is noticeable that Brahmins are concentrated in North India. Thus, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir they form more than a third of the total Hindu population, the highest proportion anywhere in India. In most of the northern and north-western States, they form over 10 per cent of the Hindu population. However, the proportion declines sharply as we move eastward or southward. The separation between Brahmins and non-Brahmins is vastly more rigid in South India than in the North. In the South there is only a tiny minority of Brahmins against a huge majority of the lower castes, especially Sudras, who do not belong to the three upper castes, and do not wear the sacred thread.

In some areas, the urban concentration of Brahmins is five times greater than that of the rest of the Hindus. The reason is the occupational trend among Brahmins toward office work and other learned professions, which draws them to the cities. Apparently, there are two main trends of social and geographical mobility with caste implications. One of these is the migration of unskilled labourers, mostly to plantation areas of Assam and South India. This may partly be tbe reason for the high concentration of scheduled castes in Assam where they constitute more than one-third of the total Hindu population, and in the former Travancore State, now parts of Kerala, where the proportion is more than 50 per cent. Even within the same State, caste concentration often varies strikingly from one district to another. A factor which determines the concentration of castes in a given area is the numerical strength of non-Hindu religious communities. Lower caste members tend to adopt a new religion. Thus, where the proportion of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and recently of Buddhists is high, that of the lower castes will be smaller.

At the opposite pole of the caste system stand the untouchables or 'Scheduled Castes'. Although they form the most notorious aspect of the caste system, it is not easy to define who belongs to them and who does not. Theory is not of much avail in this matter. The difficulty is that there are many divisions even among the groups broadly defined as untouchable. Many untouchables treat each other as

untouchables. As Mahatma Gandhi pointed out: 'All the various grades of untouchables are untouchable among themselves, each superior grade considering the inferior grade as polluting it in the same manner as the highest class of the caste Hindus regard the worst grade of untouchables.' And of Tamilnadu it was stated that there were 'no less than eighty sub-divisions among the Harijans (untouchables), those at the top regarding the less fortunate of their own brethren as untouchable'.

Some sub-castes, which are considered untouchable in one area, are not treated as untouchable in an adjoining area. According to the census of 1931, the last one in which the caste affiliation of the individual was recorded, the depressed castes numbered 50.2 million, i.e., somewhat less than in the census of 1921 when the figure stood at 52.7 million. The reason for this decrease was the disinclination of many individuals to admit that they belonged to an untouchable caste. Even the 1921 figure is considered low and the actual figure for 1931 was estimated between 55 and 60 million individuals. In 1921 the percentage of untouchables among the total Hindu population stood at 25 per cent; but it fell to 21 per cent in 1931. Even so, the number of the outcastes is very high—it is the largest bottom layer of any class structure in the world. The Negroes in the United States, comparable in some respects (though certainly not in all) to the untouchables, constitute less than 10 per cent of the total population, and the Eta caste in Japan was never more than 15 per cent of the total population. The large number of outcastes in India attests to the low material standards, for the lower strata must bear the brunt of the struggle for survival in an over-populated, underdeveloped country. The fact is that the scheduled castes form the largest single caste complex.

The functional basis of the caste system is the mutual obligation of each caste to render services in which it specialises to all members of the village community, ideally without consideration of status or wealth. Its services are returned in goods or reciprocal services. This is the *jajmani* system. Some of the higher caste people, however, refuse to render services to the low castes. A Brahmin who officiates at the ceremonies of princes or very important persons rises in status within the Brahmin community. On the other hand, Brahmins who perform services for the lower castes would slip down in the rank order within their caste. Hence, Brahmins refuse to officiate at ceremonies and rituals of low caste members. And the

latter would have difficulty in procuring a priest for the purpose. Some low caste individuals officiate as priests for members of their own caste and, in the course of time, claim to be Brahmins. Such claims are resisted by the real Brahmins, but the outcome cannot be determined in advance. Some upstart Brahmins are successful in getting their claim accepted, others are not.

An index of the stability of the caste structure is the degree to which castes follow their traditional occupations. Figures compiled for twenty-four castes in the 1931 census showed that somewhat less than half the members of any caste were engaged in their traditional occupation. But the proportion varied from State to State. A study made in the Punjab in 1931 on the basis of figures for forty-two castes showed that almost two-thirds of the caste members were engaged in traditional occupations. Similarly, in Baroda over two-thirds of the people pursued the traditional calling. Traditional caste occupations still mean something, although it is not certain just what that something is, especially when we remember that the choice of occupations in India is extremely limited. Because employment opportunities are so few, an individual is compelled to take the work which is available and which is likely to be his paternal calling. Comparative figures show that most of those following their traditional occupation are, as is to be expected, concentrated in agriculture.

Social mobility seems to have taken place in menial occupations. But occupational mobility is higher among the upper castes than among the lower, for literacy is the main characteristic of the occupationally mobile. The trend toward the thawing of caste distinctions as reflected in the mobility of occupations reverses a movement which has been in evidence for three millennia.

Economic change is decisive in the dissolution of the caste system, whose kernel is the relationship, which depends on the division of labour within the rural community, between the sub-caste and an occupation. As soon as the chain of hereditary occupation is broken or the pattern of the division of labour in the village is disrupted, the system loses its organic character and becomes something ritualistic and formal. The rural division of labour was upset with the introduction of machine industry, which rendered many traditional occupations of the village useless and redundant. The weavers, oil pressers, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc., lost work and became landless labourers.

The forces which tend to break up the caste system are the same that created it. If the Hindu social order may be summed up as 'the most thorough-going attempt known in human history to introduce absolute inequality as the guiding principle in social relationships', it seems that this very attempt is the reason for the breakdown of the caste system. It is impossible to maintain a totally rigid social structure. On the surface it might appear rather simple to order the castes in a pattern of rank and precedence. In fact it proved impossible. Max Weber recorded:

> It is perhaps impossible to determine the rank order of the castes; it is contested and subject to change. An attempt was made in 1901 by the British census to settle this rank order once and for all. It was not repeated; the excitement and discontent that resulted was out of all proportion to the intended result. The attempt to classify the castes set off a signal for competitive demands by the castes for social rank and the procurement of historical 'proofs' to support their claims. It led to remonstrances and protests of all kinds and called forth a considerable and partly instructive literature. Castes of questionable rank sought to exploit the census for stabilizing their position and used the census authorities, as one census expert put it, as a kind of herald's office. Amazing claims of new rank were made. The Bengal Chandal, for instance, the lowest caste, alleged to stem from a mixture of Brahmin women with Sudra men (actually a Hinduized guest people from Bengal), rebaptized themselves Namashudra and sought to trace their descent to a pure caste and 'prove' their Brahmin blood.[2]

Apart from these, however, former professional soldier and robber castes which had turned to cultivation took the opportunity to be counted as Kshatriyas. The 'priests' of tribes or low castes wanted to be recognised as Brahmins. Castes engaged in trade claimed to be Vaishyas. 'Animistic tribes demanded registration as castes and with as high a rank as possible. Certain sects sought reintegration into the Hindu community.'[3] The different castes and groups in India may be compared to an armful of marbles which may be held loosely, but fall apart if held together tightly. This merely reflects the fact, which is known to social scientists, that inequality is a dynamic

[2]Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, The Free Press, New York, 1958, p. 47.
[3]Ibid., p. 47.

force. It creates tensions and hostilities which do not allow the social system to become stable. In the last resort, caste precedence was enforced by the secular power. Although each caste is self-regulating and determines who are its members, no caste can unilaterally change its status in relation to others. For this purpose, an appeal had to be made to the adjudicative and coercive power of the secular authority.

Some castes multiply faster than others. The numerical growth or decline of a caste seems to possess a functional rationale. Larger numbers of low caste people are needed to carry out the duties peculiar to them, whereas priestly functions as well as those typical of the warrior castes do not require large numbers. Thus, ban on widow remarriage prevalent in the higher castes serves economic and social purposes. If the higher castes proliferated rapidly, their status would be reduced. If a high caste becomes too numerous it would split, some parts tending to decline while the others retaining their status. Such division of an upper caste is bound to weaken it. This means that the upper strata must breed at a slower rate, which is not peculiar in the caste system. On the other hand, if a ruling class becomes too small it would find difficulty in maintaining its position. It is the dilemma of the elite.

The process of religious conversion, helps to break the rigidity of caste taboos. It enables victims of caste restrictions, namely, low caste members, to escape into relatively casteless religions such as Islam, Christianity or Sikhism. In fact, these non-Hindu religions hold great attraction to the low castes by offering a softening of social disabilities. Most of the converts to Christianity were untouchables: in some parts of the country 'Christian' signified an untouchable. In Tamilnadu the number of Christians increased by 275,000 between 1921 and 1931 and the number of Muslims by 170,000; these increments were attributed to conversions from the depressed classes. After 1931 there was a move among the untouchables to join Buddhism or Sikhism.

Initially, conversions to Buddhism were insignificant but gained momentum suddenly in the decade from 1951 to 1961, when the number of Buddhists rose from 180,823 to 3,250,227. In ten years the Buddhists multiplied almost 17 times! The Census Report of 1961 pointed out: 'This striking increase has been due in part to the neo-Buddhist movement which swept the country during the decade. The movement seems to have taken in its stride all States and Union

Territories except Madras, Orissa and Rajasthan.' But the remarkable fact is that the greatest increase took place in Maharashtra, where the number of Buddhists increased from a mere 2,487 in 1951 to an impressive 2,789,501 in 1961. In 1951 Buddhists made up a mere 0.01 per cent of the total population of Maharashtra but in 1961 a substantial minority of over 7 per cent. In 1951 only 1.4 per cent of the Buddhists in India lived in Maharashtra but over 45 per cent in West Bengal and 66 per cent in the three north-eastern States of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. But the centre of gravity of the Buddhists has shifted: over 85 per cent are now in Maharashtra while the next largest concentration is in the neighbouring State of Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Ambedkar, leader of the untouchables, who raised the untouchables to political consciousness, was a Maharashtrian. He propagated conversion to a casteless religion. But he excluded two religions which would have helped best: Islam and Christianity; for these would have put the untouchables beyond the pale of Hinduism. Apparently, Ambedkar wanted his community to remain within the orbit of Hinduism, and conversion to Sikhism and Buddhism were the two possibilities. Another consideration is that under the Constitution of India, if converted to Islam or Christianity, an untouchable loses his special rights and privileges, such as facilities for education and easier entry into government service. He does not lose these rights if he becomes a Sikh or a Buddhist. This provision is based on the consideration that the caste system is repugnant to Islam and Christianity but not to religions which are indigenous to India. In Ambedkar's lifetime the advice to untouchables to join another faith did not find much response. But suddenly, during the decade following Ambedkar's death, the path indicated by him has been taken by many of his followers. With their conversion to Buddhism, the untouchables not only are assured of a more egalitarian spiritual home, but they will also dominate the Buddhist community in India, especially in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Another factor of social change was the new legal system. At first the British authorities wanted to sustain traditional Hindu and Muslim law. After 1864 a new policy was adopted and the law courts began to act as levellers of social distinctions based on caste, which tended to undermine the position of Brahmins. The heart was torn out of the caste system with the passage of the Caste Disabilities Removable Act in 1850, which protected the property rights of

Hindus who left the religion or were outcasted. Caste panchayats lost power. The Census Report of 1931 noted that, with the right to appeal to a Court against them,

> the power of the caste panchayats has thus greatly weakened in the last few decades and is now almost extinct. If a panchayat decreed a fine or penalty in the past, it could enforce its decision. In case that the offender was recalcitrant it could prevent his intercourse with the community without fear of itself getting into trouble. Now such a recalcitrant member can file a suit in the civil court against the members of a panchayat or prosecute them for defaming him.

The Special Marriage Act of 1872 enabled a couple who declared that they did not accept any caste or religion, to marry by civil procedure. In 1923 the necessity of renunciation was removed but a proviso was added whereby:

> If two Hindus belonging to different castes marry under this act, they are not required to renounce their religion in declaration but they lose certain of their personal rights as Hindus. They cannot adopt. On their marriage they cease to be the members of a joint family to which they previously belonged. Whatever rights in the property of the family would have accrued to them by survivorship under Hindu law cease.

An inherent contradiction of the system is that, theoretically, castes are not delimited geographically but in fact they are. The caste system is a social and cultural division. Yet the system can function effectively only in a geographically static society. Typically each village or group of villages is self-sufficient for it contains all the castes needed to perform the essential services. The community must be in a position to persuade or compel individuals not to leave the village unless they are surplus to its needs. Since it cannot do this if there is widespread spatial mobility, the caste system cuts the social structure not only horizontally but vertically; the sub-castes are ordered hierarchically but also localised spatially. Castes develop strong local patriotism. The retarding effect of the caste system on political or economic progress results from spatial immobility rather than from status rigidity. Conversely, spatial

mobility would suffice to disrupt the caste system. No wonder that the tradition of the Indian village discourages travel, especially to distant areas (except pilgrimage to holy places). Increasing travel tends to upset the caste order.

Other forces, such as education, have also worked against the caste system. As B.B.B. Misra puts it:

> The new forces which weakened the traditional economic order were those of western education and a capitalist economy, a free judiciary and parliamentary institutions. The contribution of western education lay mainly in three things. First, it broke the intellectual monopoly of the Brahmins by opening the doors of education to all classes. Second, it created an educated class of Indians comprising members of the various learned professions who cut across caste and became supporters of liberal reforms. Third, it set in motion an unprecedented degree of occupational mobility which helped to increase social mobility.

Brahmins were among the first to take advantage of facilities for English education and to tread the new avenues of employment opened by it. Despite measures adopted in many States to encourage lower castes to obtain education, Brahmins are still numerous in the learned professions. A more serious result of occupational mobility has been that the higher social strata has virtually monopolised opportunities for advancement; in some respects disparity between the higher and the lower strata has grown even wider.

Politically, the main objection to the caste system is that it is divisive. To begin with, it creates a vertical division between the four *varnas* (or five, if we include the Harijans who are *avarnas*). But the sub-caste groups, which regulate marriage and other social relations, stop at the linguistic boundaries. In other words, a Punjabi-speaking Brahmin sub-caste will not be found in an area where Punjabi is not spoken. Thus, if a Punjabi speaking Brahmin, who happens to live outside the language area, wants to marry according to the caste usage, he would have to return to his original home to find a suitable match. He might by chance find a suitable bride in a Punjabi-speaking Brahmin sub-caste in the area where he is resident; in any case he is unlikely to marry into a non-Punjabi-speaking Brahmin sub-caste. But this reluctance is based on convenience. A bride speaking a different language would not fit into the

bridegroom's family. In other words, while caste divides Hindu society vertically, it does not produce a corresponding unity cutting across regions or linguistic divisions.

Those who fear that the caste system tends to destroy national unity argue that caste divisions produce economic and political conflict. Seling S. Harrison author of the well-known work, *India, the Most Dangerous Decades*, is an exponent of this viewpoint. But conflict is not necessarily divisive; it may be a cement which holds a political community together. The castes and sub-castes coexisted until recently in a symbolic relationship—the *jajmani* system. So long as castes or sub-castes merely coexisted, though cooperatively, they were not cemented together as they are when they enter into mutually competitive relationships where coexistence is replaced by conflict.

A society suffused by competition and conflict acquires a dynamic force whereby it may be wrought into a political community, or nation. Insofar as the previously static caste system has become dynamic, it generates a political force, whereas mere coexistence did not fashion political unity. The important point is that the caste system has become charged with an explosive dynamic. This leads to an apparent strengthening of caste and sub-caste ties and increases conflict between them. On the whole, however, social competition promotes equality. As equality among castes increases, the caste system will become superfluous.

*Untouchability**

GORA

Who is an untouchable?

He or she is one who takes the label. Unlike the difference between Blacks and Whites, discarding the label loses the distinction. Who can vouch that all the restaurants with the sign board, 'Brahmin Hotel', are manned by Brahmins? The workers come from different places and States. They wear the thread and pass off as Brahmins. The reverse also is possible. There was an incident in Andhra Pradesh. In these days of unemployment, the medical profession presents opportunities for self-employment. So there is a big rush for admission to medical colleges. Some seats are reserved for students of the Scheduled Castes, that is, untouchables. Every student who seeks admission for the reserved seat has to obtain a certificate from an officer of rank or from a legislator that the applicant belongs to the Scheduled Caste. Strangely, it was found that some non-untouchables managed to obtain the required certificate.

In the cases cited above, the taking of the labels of Brahmins or of untouchables was a matter of greed to gain advantage rather than of a desire to abolish the distinction. Nevertheless, the incidents reveal that nothing inherent warrants the segregation into untouchables. One can pass off easily for another. The distinction is merely conventional. No one is born an untouchable. Parental upbringing and social suggestion build up habits of untouchability into the individual. I saw a boy of four or five years playing with dust and stones on a village road. His mother was cutting grass in the adjacent field. Presently, two persons with caste-marks on their foreheads and thread on their shoulders came that way. The symbols made them Brahmins. They were engaged in a hot discussion and did not mind the child on the road. But the mother cried out, 'You stupid, get out of the road. Brahmins are coming. Don't touch them.' She

*From *Seminar* (**177**), May 1974.

rushed out, dragged the boy away from the road, gave him a slap and left him weeping by the road-side. By repeating such treatment. the mother was teaching untouchability to the child. Untouchability is in the tradition of the Hindu caste-system. Change of the convention abolishes untouchability. Therefore, Ambedkar rightly pointed out that one has to leave Hinduism in order to leave untouchability.

How untouchability came into vogue is a matter of history and conjecture. Different versions are put forth to explain the practice. It might have had its own justifications based upon prevalent prejudices in ancient times, just as serfdom was in vogue under feudal regimes. But a thing it was is not justification for why it should be. We are not concerned very much with the origin of untouchability. We consider it an evil today. No useful purpose will be served by finding fault with our ancestors for their practices. On the other hand, we are wrong in going their way, when it is found unsuitable to present times. So, our task is to devise ways and means to uproot untouchability, however deep it may be in tradition. The discovery of the causes of untouchability will be incidental to our effort to remove it rather than our primary concern to scan them. If we are lost in investigating the causes, we are likely to miss the result want to achieve. After all, the old causes that sustained untouchability would have lost their significance in the present situation. We beat a dead horse if we grow too historical. To remove untouchability today as we find it is our immediate job.

Already the practice of untouchability is highly discredited. Crusaders are angry with it. If ancient scriptures accorded sanction to it, crusaders go to the extent of burning the scriptures in public. Burning of the *Manusmriti* is a common programme today for indignant youth. On the positive side, Ambedkar and Gandhi made mighty efforts to abolish untouchability. With a view to change the old attitude, Gandhi changed the old names and called untouchables 'Harijans' or children of God. Consistent with his religious approach to solve the problems of India, he thought that all were equal children of God or Harijans, and so it was unfair to distinguish some as untouchables. He sponsored the Harijan Sevak Sangh and entrusted it to the care of non-untouchables with the admonition that they should run it in a spirit of repentence for continuing an ancient practice and a present evil.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh took up several ameliorative measures

to improve the lot of the untouchables. The programmes proceeded stage by stage starting with temple entry, education and, finally, two years before his assassination, Gandhi took a vow that he would not give his good wishes for marriages unless it be between a touchable and an untouchable. Ambedkar was militant in his programmes. He wanted separate electorates for untouchables and ended up with leaving the Hindu faith and embracing Buddhism. The climate created by Gandhi and Ambedkar precipitated the issue and incorporated Article 17 in the Constitution of India which laid down that abolition of untouchability and forbidding its practices in any form was a fundamental right.

Despite the earnest efforts of those stalwarts and their many followers and despite the presence of Article 17 of the Constitution, the practice of untouchability has its grip over the traditional pattern of behaviour. The reservations granted by the Constitution benefit but a small fraction of the untouchable community while millions of untouchables continue to live in slums and squalor. Even the few who are benefited by reservations get respect temporarily so long as they hold a post of authority. A permanent change in the attitude of people has not been effected. Measures like grants of land, mixed marriages and educational facilities are more in the nature of charity than in the way of effecting a radical change in the relations between touchables and untouchables. Untouchables continue to live physically segreagted in ghettoes and socially discriminated in day-to-day business. The discrimination denies them opportunities of employment and therefore they remain poor eking out a meagre living by manual labour. Poverty and untouchability go together. The change of religion or of name has not yielded the expected results. Neo-Buddhists remains another name for untouchables like Harijans.

What then should be the programmes for effective change in attitudes in order to remove untouchability? During the long years of the practice of untouchability, political and economic considerations have entered into its religious and social origins. The shrewd and the educated among the untouchables appropriate advantages of reservation and special concessions while the mass of untouchables live in the traditional ways of religious faith and social isolation. Further, the few who enjoy the benefits of reservation are disinclined towards the removal of untouchability lest they should lose the benefits of reservation.

Yet, untouchability is not the problem of untouchables alone, just as war is not the problem of militarists. War endangers life and the security of civilians also. Similarly, untouchability with its associate poverty, ingorance and extreme discontent distorts democracy and places society on top of a volcano. Therefore, the removal of untouchability is the common problem of all Indians. A sectarian approach like class conflict or separate electorates will not help to solve the problem. On the contrary, sectarian remedies breed narrow vested interests in people. Gandhi took the right step when he entrusted the Harijan Sevak Sangh to the care of non-untouchables and involved them in the task of the removal of untouchability.

On account of ancient origins and modern development, the two principal aspects of the problem of untouchability are: religious faith and political power. Both of them have been effective methods of making and mending attitudes of people and organising social relations. Therefore, the solution of the problem needs religious and political approaches. Whatever may be the origins of untouchability, it is fixed in the minds of Hindus by faith in the philosophy of *karma*. *Karma* means that one is born into a caste as a result of his actions in the previous birth and that he could improve his caste only in the next birth by dutifulness to the caste of his present birth. Accordingly, every Hindu has to rue his own *karma*. Untouchables believe that they are destined to be miserable and that redemption from misery comes to them from the patient sufferance of present misery. So long as faith in *karma* lasts, untouchables seek no way out of their degradation, except to lie in silent resignation with a sense of frustration.

The illusion of *karma* divides people wider apart than the patent differences of the colour of the skin or the shape of the nose. A Brahmin is more alien to a *Chamar* than a White is to a Black or a Mongol to a Semite, even though a Brahmin and a *Chamar* cannot be recognised as such except by the labels they take for themselves. The hierarchy of the caste-structure is based upon faith in *karma*. Evidently, attitudinal differences count more in human affairs than physical distinctions. Political factions, cultural affinities and bellicose patriotism which are changeable concepts, greatly influence patterns of behaviour. Although an ignorant, illiterate untouchable cannot be credited with an intelligent understanding of the *karma* philosophy, tradition binds him to the fundamentals of the philosophy of life, just as one learns one's mother tongue through usage

without being versed in the grammar of the language. Hindus are divided into caste, not because they understand the principles of the division of labour which is the ostensible reason put forward to justify caste divisions, but because they are trained by tradition and are bound by convention. Therefore, they blindly stick to customs of the caste of their guardians, although the associate trades have changed since the time when they were socially enjoined.

So, untouchables are untouchables by traditional faith in *karma*. They lie reconciled to their lot, however miserable it may be, as they consider their plight inevitable. The forebearance kills initiative and deadens rebellion against an obvious injustice. Therefore, Hindus are sentimentally idealistic but virtually wicked on account of the outdated and unfair caste distinctions. Otherwise, neither would the untouchables have lain low for so long, nor would the non-untouchables have callously allowed the inequalities and indignities to continue. An elementary sense of justice would show that the practice of untouchability is a heinous crime against humanity. But faith in *karma* blinded the vision and woodened the mind. The disgraceful famine of Bengal in 1944 when thousands of destitutes died of sheer hunger by the side of stores laden with edibles in the streets of the city of Calcutta, was possible only in India with its *karma*-ridden population. A hungry dog would pounce upon and devour the provisions. But the destitutes died of hunger as they had been taught that they were destined to starve. Faith in *karma* made man less than a beast.

Only atheism stirs the Hindus from this magnificent stupor and impotent complacency. It dismisses their faith in *karma* and rebirth as a myth and a hoax and thereby demolishes the foundations of the caste system. The atheistically awakened untouchables open their eyes and see that they are humans like any others. Atheistic awakening breaks traditions of caste rules, and converts all castes into one humanity. Nothing short of the adoption of atheism can abolish untouchability and restore human justice.

Gandhi was not averse to discarding Hinduism, if the faith stood in the way of the removal of untouchability. As early as in 1920 he said, 'If the inhuman treatment of *Panchams* were a part of Hinduism, its rejection would be the paramount duty both for them and for those like me who would not make a fetish even of religion and condone every evil in its sacred name. But I believe

untouchability is not a part of Hinduism.'[1] He proclaimed at the Second Round Table Conference: 'I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.' Yet, his method did not yield stable results because he adopted theistic language. Moreover, he gave top priority to political freedom and expected that the government of free India would remove untouchability easily through appropriate legislation. So, during the days of struggle for political freedom, he could not do more for the removal of untouchability than to include it as an item of constructive work, to establish the Harijan Sevak Sangh and to popularise the alternative name of Harijan.

Legislation was made. Article 17 was strongly worded. 'Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.' Yet, the practice of untouchability continues. The reason for this weakness is the delay to adopt atheism. Heads of State participate in religious ritual in their official capacity. Traditional belief in *karma* grips the minds of people. Evidently the incorporation of Article 17 in the Constitution of India was sentimentally idealistic rather than emotionally earnest. So, respect for it is formal now, and the removal of untouchability has fallen into the conventional ruts of acts of charity. Being the victims of faith in *karma*, untouchables too do not look for anything better than ameliorative concessions.

Acts of charity have their limitations. They keep beneficiaries passive recipients without desiring change in the social structure. They do not cure the disease but soothe pain. Experiences of the *Bhoodan* Movement reveal the inability of the motive of charity to solve a problem. *Bhoodan* reduced the distance between donors and donees without removing poverty. A problem cannot be solved unless the victims feel the urge for justice. It is atheism that stimulates people to the feeling of the right to live as equals and honourably. Therefore, the spread of atheism is indispensable for the removal of untouchability. Atheism undoubtedly makes people aware of a problem. But, in the modern age, political power with an economic objective, channelises the awareness in order to solve the problem and to achieve results. By changing from Hinduism to Buddhism, Ambedkar certainly awakened people to a sense of self-respect. If he had gone the whole hog with the new awareness, he would have shown the way to remove untouchability lock, stock and barrel.

[1] *Young India*, 27 October 1920.

But Ambedkar hesitated to proceed with economic programmes in the wake of the attitudinal change. Consequently, the same scramble for reservations and the same neglect of the mass of untouchables was repeated again. Therefore, political and economic programmes are also necessary for the removal of untouchability besides atheistic awakening.

The atheistically awakened untouchables cannot derive the benefits of democracy unless they participate in its working. Democracy grants political equality through universal adult franchise. Untouchable adults also have one vote each like the others. Through political participation they can press for appropriate legislation so that political equality leads to economic and social equalities also. So far, they cast votes at elections but prayed to God for food. Therefore, they could not obtain the equality contained in the democratic principle. Political participation is necessary to put into effect the equality contained within democracy. Political participation consists in contesting elections in large numbers. Candidates neither need a party ticket nor do they have to spend larger amounts on election campaigns. Those are the ways of power politics. In a genuine democracy, a seat can be contested by any number of candidates. In ordinary parlance, they are Independents. But in truth they are the real people's candidates as different from party candidates. A contest at elections does not mean immediate success at the poll. Except in the case of unopposed returns, only one wins a seat.

Nevertheless, contesting in large numbers has two definite advantages. First, it brings into the mainstream a large number of untouchables who have been confined to slums, and it involves them in political responsibilities. The participation increases self-confidence and enables untouchables to resist harassment and to protest against indignities. They are no longer 'untouchables', but they become respectable citizens of the Indian Republic. Second, due to the political indifference of the mass of the people, political platforms have been occupied by political parties. Competition between parties has converted politics into power politics. Even the few members of the Scheduled Castes who get elected on reserved seats turn into stooges of one or the other party and are unable to serve the community as a whole. On account of the partisan attitude of the legislators, Article 17 is failing in its implementation. When untouchables contest elections in large numbers,

they break the monopoly of political parties and restore democracy from power politics to real politics. Real democracy is partyless. It is the government of the people, unlike the present party-ridden democracy which is virtually the dictatorship of the majority party. People's democracy attends to the needs of the people and helps the political equality of adult suffrage to proceed towards social and economic equalities.

The new people's platform with wide political participation invites several backward people who have been badly hit by power politics. Problems of minorities also will have no relevance hereafter, inasmuch as all people will merge into the mainstream. Minorities are artificial borders raised by power politicians for justifying their own sectarian attitude and selfish interest. In democracy the distinction into majority and minority is a temporary phase at the time of voting on the merits of an issue. It should have no stable bloc or whip. All people are equal before the law and every legislator represents the people as a whole. He or she should not be allowed to be partisan or sectarian in any way.

Wide political participation of untouchables should not be a difficult proposition. In 1920, Indians had the same diffidence and sense of frustration as the untouchables have today. Imperialists did not treat Indians better than untouchables are looked upon now. But the rise of the political movement and people's large scale participation in it converted cowards into bold satyagrahis who won applause. Similar change is possible for untouchables now through wide political participation. Neither slander nor sabotage of reactionaries can prevent the rise of a popular movement.

The removal of untouchability is a package deal. Atheistic awakening and political participation are its principal programmes. Just as items of constructive work enjoyed respect and support during the period of the struggle for political freedom, ameliorative acts like mixed marriages, allotment of land, educational concessions and access to public places will be more real than formal along with the political participation of untouchables. Segregation of untouchables into special quarters is cruelly unjust. If public offices like post offices are housed within such slums, the isolation will be broken. By and large, every programme should be aimed at converting untouchables into ordinary citizens and joining them in the mainstream.

*Secularism**

ABU SAYEED AYYUB

Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith has done well to point out the deplorable confusion which exists in this country about the meaning of 'secularism'. He has classified the different meanings which are commonly attached to the word into three main groups. I shall say something about the first two, hoping that I shall not be adding to the confusion in the attempt to reduce it.

If the western conception of secularism rested solely on the separation of Church and State, it would no doubt be of little concern to us. It could, however, be made relevant to Indian conditions by simply substituting the word 'religion' for 'church'. The separation of State and religion can be conceived negatively as a principle of exclusion: the State must not interfere with any sphere of life which comes under the authority of religion. This is hardly practicable in a country like India where the major religions (or the social organisations and principles based upon them, like the *varnasramadharma* and the *shariah*) cover almost every aspect of man's life from birth to death.

It can also be conceived positively as the State's determination to observe impartiality and strict neutrality in its relations with the religious institutions and practices of the different communities of the land. This conception has high tradition behind it; it was expressed in the Asokan edicts and more elaborately formulated in Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858. This somewhat modified form of the Western (or Asokan?) conception of secularism is currently favoured here and has found its way into our Constitution.

Of course, there is a difference between the British Indian conception of secularism and the form in which it has been adopted by the makers of the Constitution of independent India. The British Government in India not only abstained from 'all interference with the religious belief or worship of our subjects' (as had been enjoined

*From *Seminar* (67), March 1965.

by the Queen), but abstained also from interference with the religious practices, or practices arising out of religious beliefs, of the various Indian communities (apart from one or two notable exceptions, e.g., the 1832 act banning *sati*) however repugnant they might be to modern ideas of morality and sanitation. The Indian Constitution, on the other hand, guarantees the freedom to profess, practise and propagate religion 'subject to public order, morality and health'. This qualifying clause reserves to the Indian State the right to interfere very considerably with the existing religious practices. That right has been exercised so far in regard only to the Hindu community (the legal ban on the practice of untouchability, child marriage and polygamy, legalisation of divorce by consent, etc.). I hope this wholesome right will soon be exercised in regard to the other communities, with the consent of course of their representatives in the parliament.

Donald Eugene Smith has justified such interference in religious matters by pointing out that the tremendous urge for effective social and religious reform in India can only be satisfied by State action, since 'Hinduism lacks the kind of ecclesiastical organisation necessary to set its own house in order.'[1] Whatever be the justification, this deviation from the Western or, at any rate, the Queen's notion of secularism is all to the good. In fact, we could do with a little more deviation. For instance, the offering of slaughtered animals to God or to one of the gods could be banned. And though the appeasement of the ghosts of our pre-historic tribal ancestors by slaughtering members of another community is a serious crime punishable by death under the law of both India and Pakistan, it continues to be practised extensively and with a fair amount of impunity in both countries due to administrative slackness in enforcing the law, particularly during the first two or three days of the outburst of communal murders. If widespread prejudices stand in the way of prohibiting the former kind of pseudo-religious slaughter right now, nothing should stand in the way of putting an immediate stop to the latter kind. No civilised government can tolerate such knife-and-petrol expression of religious fanaticism today.

The second meaning of secularism is called by Cantwell Smith 'the Hindu view' and described as pluralist. With excessive brevity he says, 'by the Hindu notion of secularism I mean the attitude that

[1]D.E. Smith, *India as a Secular State*, OUP, Bombay, 1963, p. 125.

rather than rejecting any or all religion, instead accepts all'. This, of course, is not to be taken literally, for the Hindu does not accept Islam or Christianity in anything like the sense in which the Muslim or the Christian accepts his religion, namely, in the theoretical aspects as infallible truth, and in its practical aspect as absolutely obligatory. In what sense then does the Hindu accept other religions? It is often maintained that the Hindu, the enlightened Hindu that is to say, regards all religions as true. This could mean one of three things. He regards (a) all religions as equally true; (b) all religions as true in some degree, but his own religion as true in a higher degree than any other religion (this would imply a belief in degrees of truth instead of a sharp dichotomy between truth and error), (c) A's religion as true for A, and B's religion true for B, and so forth (this would imply that truth is multiple like error).

I find it difficult to believe that Hindus accept the first of these propositions. One of the greatest and most enlightened of all the Hindus and moreover a staunch advocate of the universality of all religions, Swami Vivekananda, is on record as having said:

> Whether we call it Vedantism or any ism, the truth is that *Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought* and the only position from which we can look upon all religions and sects with love. We believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races. [emphasis added]

Have the other religions yet arrived at the Vedantic notion of *Brahman*, or its identity with the self? The answer is no, and the implication is obvious.

Or let us consider in this connection, S. Radhakrishnan's favourite quotation from the *Upanishads*: 'The real is one, the learned call it by various names—*Agni*, *Yama*, *Matarisvan*.' I should think it is not the abstract and transcendent real, but its actual expression in our hearts or realisation through our actions which is of the deepest concern to and significance for us. These are inevitably many, and surely one could be higher or completer than the other. The Vedantists (S. Radhakrishnan included) hold that the impersonal Absolute (*Brahman*) is truth on a higher plane than the personal God (*Iswara*). In fact, *Iswara* is an illusion (although the highest of all illusions) from the higher Vedantic point of view. Is not the God of

Islam and of Christianity a personal God from any point of view acceptable to the learned upholders of those religions?

I would not, therefore, interpret the Hindu pluralist view as accepting all religions or believing in the equal truth of all religions. It should be interpreted a little more moderately. Two elements stand out in this pluralism. The first is expressible in the third of my above propositions, but in fact goes beyond that. It not only says, 'the truth of my religion is true for me and of your religion for you', but adds, 'please stick to the truth of your religion'. For there is no provision strictly within Hinduism to universalise its truth, and invite others to participate in its own realisation of the truth.

No one can become a Hindu by merely accepting Hindu religious doctrines or moral codes; he has to be born a Hindu.[2] Hinduism is an ethnic religion and as such constitutes a closed society. Its own peculiar kind of intolerance is shown by the contempt with which it shuts its doors to those born outside its fold (regarded as 'unclean' by birth), just as a different kind of tolerance is shown by the eagerness and warmth with which open religious societies like those constituted by Buddhism, Christianity or Islam invite the outsider to come within their folds. Force in such matters is always reprehensible, but the eagerness points to a sort of potential human fraternity in which they all believe. Each religion gives rise to its own brand of tolerance and intolerance, and to its own unique recipe for preparing a mixture of the two on which it puts its label.

The other and more important point in the Hindu pluralist view is the recognition of the multiplicity of religious truths. The Hindu of course prefers his own form of it for himself and regards it as the highest form, but is not intolerant of the other forms upheld by others. His attitude is more than merely tolerant: there is in it a distinct trace of respect if not of reverence for all other religions. Not that this respect for the truth contained in other religions is shared by all the Hindus or even by all the enlightened Hindus; I could cite many distinguished names, but that is hardly necessary. What is important, however, is to remember that pluralism in this restricted sense is the view of the leaders of the present government.

[2]The shuddhi movement is a bit of an innovation. It has had little success not only because few non-Hindus want to be converted (or reconverted) to Hinduism, but because few Hindus are willing to accept them as full members of their community.

It is also the view, or rather one of the views (the other being the modified Western view), which is embodied in the Constitution of India. And this could not be possible if it was not the Hindu view, by and large.

What I find most disturbing is the summary way in which Cantwell Smith dismisses the practicability of this Hindu view of secularism for India by categorically affirming that it is 'definitely not compatible with atheist or Christian or Muslim (views)'. Elsewhere he says that 'this doctrine may be offensive to minorities'. So far as I know, far from being offensive, this view has been firmly held by such eminent Muslims as Abul Kalam Azad, Hussain Ahmad Madani, Zakir Hussain and a host of lesser but not insignificant men of thought and action belonging to the Muslim community.

It is true that their secularism and nationalism was defeated by the 'two-nation' theory of Muhmmad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah was distinguished for many things but not for his Islamic piety. His ignorance of Islam was equally profound; in all matters relating to Islamic theology, jurisprudence, history, literature and culture, he was not fit to sit at the feet of men like Madani or Azad. And yet he made up his mind to carve out a State in the name of Islam in the teeth of opposition by men immeasurably superior to himself in any Islamic sense. The causes of his success were multiple and complex; but a discussion of these would make an essay by itself. This carving was called by Jinnah and his successors, The Islamic State of Pakistan, though the only Islamic element which Cantwell Smith has been able to discover in that State after a close and able study of its problems is a vague initial intention to make it Islamic—an intention which is wearing not deplorably but commendably thin in the face of the enormous problems posed by a stronger and more vital intention, namely, the intention to survive and develop as a modern State, i.e., a State with high living standards, modern scientific and technological education, and commanding some respect in the comity of nations.

Cantwell Smith's important and pithy conclusion on this question is worth quoting: 'It would not be absurd perhaps, to phrase this point by saying that Pakistan will flourish as a secular State only if its Muslims are able to persuade themselves that the truly Islamic State is a secular one.'[3] And yet when the Hindus offer them a secular State in India, the Indian Muslims, according to Cantwell

[3]Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, Mentor, London, 1957, p. 254.

Smith, find it offensive. Why? And what is the big alternative idea in their heads? Are forty-five millions of them going to migrate to Pakistan, which has absolutely no room for them and is itself reluctantly groping its way towards secularism? Are 10 per cent Muslims going to re-establish a Muslim kingdom in India, fighting a civil war not only against eighty-five per cent Hindu civilians but also against a soon-to-be well-equipped and almost entirely non-Muslim army of over 8,00,000? For the Muslims of India there is absolutely no alternative to secularism, unless communal suicide be considered one. And if secularism, why not the pluralist form of it? What other conceivable form can be more acceptable to the Muslims?

The essence of Islam, it has been said, is the moral life, life according to norms which please God (*razi ba riza*—as it is expressed in Persian) not those which happen to please the individual agent. Muslims cannot deviate from this core of Islam without giving up their religion altogether. But the actual content of these norms were expressed thirteen centuries ago in the idiom of the time and place, and there is nothing unchangeable about this idiom. There is something which is eternally valuable in Islam as in every other religion, but this value is to be realised afresh in every age and society. If Muslims ever believed that the good life, the higher life, must necessarily be lived in a community, and that this community must be organised according to a pattern set thirteen hundred years ago, then I am sure they are beginning to realise now all over the world that the details of that pattern have become inconsistent with our modern notions of the good society moulded by the economic, political and intellectual situation of our time.

Hinduism too had built up an elaborate social structure; the *varnasrama dharma* prescribed detailed rules for the life of the community. But the Hindus realised fairly early in their history that these rules were not laid once for all. The *asrama dharma* has passed into the pages of ancient history, and the *varna dharma* came under attack by their medieval saints and in the nineteenth century by their intellectual leaders; it is today being gradually demolished by their political leaders. But, the task of transforming the Hindu society into a 'casteless' and 'classless' society is not going to be very easy, even though the machinery of the State has been yoked into service for that purpose. For, the caste system is supported by a still widely accepted dogma—belief in *karma* and rebirth. While half

the Hindu mind recognises caste disabilities as a form of gross social injustice, the other half (I am speaking of the great majority) continues to look upon them as a cosmic dispensation of reward and punishment in accordance with the good and bad deeds committed in the previous birth. If the evil of caste has to go, it has to go root and branch—the theoretical root and the practical branch.

For the Muslims, the conception of life in a community organised according to sacrosanct patterns, played a central role in their early history. Hali and Iqbal resurrected this conception, and made good poetry out of their nostalgia for the past. Pakistan is making futile and not too earnest efforts to live up to its nominal claim of being an Islamic State. Turkey was until the other day the leading Muslim nation of the world and the seat of the Caliphate. The new Turks, however, found that the old concept of an Islamic society, a society governed according to the laws of the *shariah*, was an obstacle to the development of their country as a modern State, and so swept the concept back to the lumber room of history. With rare moral and intellectual courage they set about the great task of not dissolving but reformulating the truth of Islam so as to be meaningful in the modern world. As the *avant-garde* Turks told Cantwell Smith: 'Turkey simply took today the necessary, salutary, and reforming step of making religion what it should be—an individual, personal matter, a thing of the conscience, a matter of private faith. The religious feeling is much too strongly embedded in the human soul for religion to be abolished. We have simply freed it.'[4]

Muslims in India must take this step, obviously even more urgent for them today than it was for the Turks forty years ago. They have been fooled once by Jinnah; they simply cannot afford to be led into committing the folly again. For we all know not that the cry for Pakistan had little to do with Islam and a great deal to do with the demand for a State-protected and State-subsidised expansion of the rising bourgeois and petit bourgeois sections of the Muslim community of the would-be Pakistan regions and of the would-be migrants to those regions.

The creation of Pakistan is regarded by the Hindus as a misfortune; for the Muslims whose home is and must remain India (and they number more than 45 millions) it was a disaster. The only interest that Pakistan now has in them is to make further capital

[4]Ibid., p. 181.

out of their religious zeal and political naivete. Any lingering predilection for the Jinnah type Muslim League politics or for any kind of communal politics will endanger the very existence of the Muslim community in India. It must learn to separate religion from politics pretty thoroughly. That is the great challenge with which the modern age confronts every religious community. Amongst the Muslims, the Turks were the first to respond to this challenge; it is the Indian Muslims' turn now.

But the creative adventure of constructing new forms which may embody the perennial contents of Islam is not only more urgent for the Indian Muslims than it was for the Turks, it is in a way also easier. The Turks had the benefit of being close neighbours to the great western culture. The Indian Muslims are geographically remoter from the West but mentally closer through their hundred years of English education (I am speaking of the Muslim intelligentsia). But, they have an additional advantage: they are in still closer physical and mental proximity to another great but very different culture, the three thousand year old culture of the Hindus. It is these contacts and comparative studies that make one realise what is great and what is small, what is central and what is peripheral, what is perennial and what is passing in one's own culture. In their attempt to internalise the religious consciousness, the Kemalist Turks banked heavily on the *Sufi* tradition which has been strong in Turkish history. They shifted the emphasis from the *shariah* (the way sanctified by the elaborate legalistic system built up by the *ulemas* on the basis of the Quran and the Hadiths) to *tariqah* or *tasawwuf* (the way of the mystics). For the Indian Muslims the mystical tradition has been still stronger; indeed, according to some, sufism was imported from India to Turkey.

Indian Islam is also not lacking in the liberal and rationalist tradition, but modern Indian Muslims have failed to make use of that tradition. Akbar deserves greater honour for the remarkably secular and liberal mind which he brought to bear on the affairs of the State at a time when dogmatism and bigotry were the order of the day all over the world. Sayyad Ahmad and Iqbal did valuable work in the reinterpretation and reconstruction of Islamic thought but failed to disturb the spiritual slumber of their Muslim fellow-countrymen; they gave a wrong lead in politics and that lead was enthusiastically taken up.

It is also insufficiently recognised here that Muslim thought at its height was not merely scholastic. Philosophers and theologians flourished side by side and carried on a lively debate: Al-Ghazzali, the greatest of the theologians, wrote a treatise in Baghdad demolishing the arguments of the philosophers (the Arab Aristotelians) which he thought weakened the pillars of Islamic orthodoxy. Ibn Rushd replied to it from distant Cordova in a memorable but hardly remembered work called *The Demolition of the Demolition of Philosophers*. He rejected the two basic theological propositions—that faith had primacy over reason, and/or that it could be reconciled with reason. Ibn Rushd maintained that faith and reason operated at different levels: the purpose of faith was to strengthen the moral will of the common people; what religion contributed to the course of history was the moral law and not knowledge. Those who seek knowledge must come to philosophy where alone one can find the highest form of truth. Before him, Al-Farabi and Abu Ali Sina had reached the conclusion that there is a single active intellect for all humanity. It was their conviction that the spiritual content and background of all religions are identical.[5] *Sufis* too adhered to the philosophical doctrine of a double standard. Law (*shariah*) was for the ordinary man; the highest virtue is love of God and his creation, and those who adopt this way of love can find the law in their own hearts.

As the Indian Muslim moves from ritual, dogma and theology either toward the great philosophers or toward the great *sufis* of Islam, he will find himself coming very close indeed to the seekers of truth and love amongst the Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and all the other great religions of the world. Not the westernisers alone but the traditionalists also can contribute greatly towards the sympathetic understanding and fraternal coexistence of faiths, provided they choose the right strands of tradition. The tradition of no religion, and not of Islam, consists of a single strand. Of the various strands of Islamic tradition, it is not the legalistic or theological and certainly not the ritualistic, but the mystic and the philosophical which are the most valuable to Indian Muslims today.

The modernisers and westernisers in India have undoubtedly a big role to play in transforming secularism, which (as Cantwell Smith rightly observes), is yet only an aspiration, into a reality.

[5]Niyazi Berkes, 'Ethics and Social Practice in Islam', Charles A Moore, ed., *Philosophy and Culture*, University of Hawaii, 1962.

Their work is very important, but not precisely in the shape many of them, and the tallest among them, would like to give it. They would like to, and believe that they will soon be able to, replace religion by science—not only for themselves but for their community as a whole. Kemal Ataturk, for instance, had his motto 'the truest guide in life is science' displayed on the main portal of the Faculty of Theology building in the University of Ankara. As a counter-challenge to the monopolistic claims of religion, this is very salutary; but as a proclamation of the function of science, it is somewhat misleading. Science is not a guide but a servant. It is not the function of science to deal with ultimate values, and so it cannot prescribe for us the ends of life. But once we have chosen our ends, it is science and science alone which can help us to find or forge the best means for realising them.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his *Autobiography*: 'The real struggle today in India is not between Hindu culture and Muslim culture, but between those two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilisation.' Although science will be the conqueror in this land as it has been in the West, it cannot fill the whole of man's mind, nor can we identify science with culture. An eminent Indian scientist said in the course of his convocation address: 'Science is the new humanism.' That was a careless statement. What then shall we do with our art and literature (let alone religion)—make them scientific, or drop them out of our new humanism? What conflict there is between the Hindu and Muslim religious cultures, and no doubt there is, cannot be wholly resolved by any outside or one-sided agency like science. Science and industry will no doubt provide a powerful unifying force; but that unity will be partial if sources of unity cannot be discovered deep within the rival cultures themselves. I believe, and have tried to point out, that they are so discoverable.

Although science cannot replace religion, it can purify religion of much extraneous matter which clings to it. Apart from the chaff of primordial superstition which every religion carries in bushels along with its life-giving grain, a lot of pseudo-science or long outdated science has formed accretions round religious ideas which, backed by the authority of religion, continue to clog our thought and action. A scientific critique of religion and the critique provided by philosophies based upon science are a very great desideratum in India. Unfortunately, they are practically non-existent; I know of nothing worth mentioning outside the writings of M. N. Roy.

Jawaharlal Nehru could have done valuable work in this line if he had not been called to active politics soon after his Cambridge days. What was done in the West by the encyclopaedists, the Comteian positivists, the evolutionists, etc., *vis-à-vis* Christianity a hundred or more years ago, has to be done today by the Indian philosophical scientists and scientific philosophers *vis-à-vis* Hinduism and Islam.

This overdue confrontation between religion and science will not demolish the foundations of religion, but it will push back its frontiers very considerably and help to redraw them where they should rightfully stand. At the moment the frontiers are vague and invisible, which means that religion extends its authority to almost every sphere of life and thought in India. This harms the usurper no less than the usurped. What in religion is tragically destructive of the free spirit of man is its dogmatism and authoritarianism. And I particularly object to the way in which we unthinkingly preserve and inculcate this feature of religion from generation to generation. Little children with impressionable and uncritical minds are made to hold, honour and obey certain rituals, doctrines and institutions whose import is altogether beyond their grasp. Worse still, they are at the same time taught to distrust and deride other religious doctrines and institutions. This is an evil practice anywhere, but more harmful and dangerous in India which is the confluence of many great religions.

I would advocate that every attempt be made to protect children from the harmful impact of sectarian religion. They may of course imbibe the broad spirit of religion (love of man and the sense of mystery of the world) from works of literature and art, but no recondite or sectarian doctrines should be taught to them at school or before; although when their natural curiosity is aroused by watching a particular religious practice in the home or outside or by listening to some religious words, it may be satisfied to the limit of their understanding and to the limit of non-sectarian impartiality attainable by the parent or teacher. It is only at college that the teachings and histories of the major religions should be placed before the students; the affinity and difference amongst their teachings, and between them and the teachings of the tribal religions, should also be shown.

It may be urged that since we do teach immature boys and even little children all manner of secular things, why should we not begin religious instruction also at a very early stage in their development?

My reply would be that in the education of the very young, we normally observe two principles: we do not teach them anything which is definitely beyond their grasp, and we do not teach them anything about which there is no general agreement even among experts. There is no reason for departing from these sound principles in the case of religious instruction.

Whether God means a majestic power to be dreaded, a loving Father in whom we can put our trust, or an impersonal Absolute; whether He receives offerings and grants favours, or is only a name for all our ideals or for a transcendent mystery; whether our virtues and vices are to be suitably rewarded and punished by an omniscient Judge in another world, or produce appropriate effects in this world on the reborn soul according to some cosmic law—are not points on which our religious experts are agreed, and are unquestionably beyond the grasp of little boys and girls. Religion is too profound a thing for them to learn as easily as they learn arithmetic, cricket or etiquette; it comes, if it comes at all, after years of heart-breaking travail and desperate quest. I am amazed by the disrespect shown to religion by our dogmatists and ritualists who normally treat it as a mere matter of habit, cramming and conditioning, more or less completed in the early years of life.

The danger of forcing incomprehensible sectarian doctrines on immature minds is twofold. When they grow up, the majority never learn to examine or question their early beliefs and so retain a dogmatic, closed and communal mind to the end of their lives. A small minority do come to realise the truth of the Socratic dictum that an unexamined life is not worth living. But when self-examination painfully reveals to them that much which they have been cherishing from early childhood is in conflict with the beliefs and practices of other sects, with the truths of science or with their own experience and reason, they become disgusted with everything which goes under the name of religion. This is equally unfortunate, for religion can teach us some of the profoundest truths and values of our life—but only when we are able to see through its barbaric heritage and sectarian limitations. I recommend holding back religious teaching until adolescence and then the simultaneous teaching of many religions as well as the psychology and philosophy of religion, in order to guard against the twin evils of sectarian narrowness and dogmatism on one hand, and religious nihilism on the other.

If we are to evolve a secular State, we need to produce secular

minds. It is obvious that the constitution of a State does not make it secular; it only records a decision. It is the secular temper of mind of the citizens of that State, at least of its educated citizens, which alone forms the base on which the edifice of secularism can stand. For that it is necessary to adopt a secular policy of education. The kind of policy which I have tried to outline may run counter to the grain of current prejudices, but the closer we approach it, the broader we shall make our religions.

The formidable communal problem in this country cannot be solved without some evolution in our religious outlook. Secularism is an intractable problem anywhere, but for us it is an absolutely urgent problem. The solution will not of course be easy. Cantwell Smith concludes by saying: 'Indian secularism, will either fail to emerge, or will emerge as something new.' The first alternative is unthinkable; it will mean the death of everything we stand for. With vast religious differences and considerable religious minorities, a non-secular State in India will be a communal State, and under existing circumstances, an Hitlerian State. The second alternative, in my opinion, is not to wait indefinitely for the emergence of a new conception of secularism, but to accept one or more of the existing conceptions with some modifications (this is what we have already done), and to adopt a new method for its realisation. The new method, I suggest, is a new policy toward religious education. This is a long-term solution which should in any case supplement other short-term solutions which may emerge.

*Modernisation**

M. N. SRINIVAS

The present decade has seen an increased interest in the study of modernisation and allied processes, especially in the developing countries. There is already a considerable body of literature on the subject, and it is not easy to say anything new without undertaking intelligent empirical studies. My aim in this brief essay is therefore a limited one, namely, to raise a few queries for general discussion. The term 'modernisation' has come to stay in sociology as also the division of societies/cultures into the traditional and the modern. In raising some questions about the concept and the dichotomy, I am only seeking greater clarity in discussion of the modernisation process, and also entering, incidentally, a plea for a clearer recognition of the assumptions involved. Otherwise there is a danger of over-simplification, and of a mechanical use of the concept and dichotomy.

The first point I would like to make, and it is an old one, is that the use of the concept of modernisation involves a value judgement. There is not sufficient recognition of this fact, and at least one well-known sociologist has argued with me that the use of the term 'modernisation' does not involve any value-judgement. According to him, it is value-free unlike westernisation which is not. I shall not try to argue this point here as I have done it at some length in my book.[1] Westernisation, as I understand it, is a process which the observer is free to approve, disapprove or remain neutral to. For instance, western medicine may be welcomed as a boon while horror comics are loathed. But modernisation, at least as I understand it, carries with it the idea that it is something good or desirable. When political, social or religious institutions are said to be 'modernised'

*From *Seminar* (**128**), April 1970.

[1]*Social Change in Modern India*, University of California Press, 1965, pp. 50-2.

there is the implication that the changes referred to are something which the speaker does not disapprove of.[2]

The obstacles to modernisation come from people who are conservative and wish to preserve the old order in a world which is changing rapidly under the influence of modern technology and communications, and the advancement of knowledge. Excepting for the conservative, and a few who are ideologically opposed to modern technology, modernisation is generally regarded with approval while 'traditional' carries with it a pejorative meaning. Other assumptions, unstated but real, are that traditionalism and modernity are incompatible and, since knowledge and communications are forever developing and at a continually faster rate, the world is shrinking under their combined impact. In other words, modernisation is inevitable, and those who resist it are pitiable Canutes. If I am right so far, then, the idea of the inevitability of modernisation is only the new *avatar* of the idea of progress which was also considered inevitable by nineteenth-century thinkers. Inevitability also appeared elsewhere in nineteenth-century thought, namely, in the Marxist prediction of the decay of capitalism followed by the transitional phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat which eventually yielded place to a classless society.

Since modernisation is a good thing and traditionalism is a bad thing, and further, since modernisation is inevitable, it is perhaps thought that it is in the interests of sociologists to get on to the bandwagon. This is putting things too crudely but it may help to explain the sudden splurge of interest in the phenomenon. My own idea is that sociologists should be for modernisation but for a different reason. The science of sociology needs, for its fullest development, to investigate into every aspect and area of social life. There cannot be any corners of the society hidden from the

[2]'It (modernization) stems initially from an attitude, a belief that *society can and should be transformed, that change is desirable.* If a definition is necessary, "modernization" may be defined as the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge, permitting control over his environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution. This process of adaptation had its origins and initial influence in the societies of Western Europe, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these changes have been extended to all other societies and have resulted in a world-wide transformation affecting all human relationships.' [Emphasis mine] C. E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernisation* New York, 1966, p. 7.

sociologist. This freedom should not only be ideal but existential, and the continual exercise of the freedom is the only guarantor of its existence. The wider social framework as well as the intellectual climate prevailing in a country should be such as to enable sociologists to exercise their right—'divine right' if I may say so—to investigate into social situations and publish the results of their research. Information about the functioning of the various institutions of the society should be available to all those interested, and the press and the public should discuss freely matters of general concern. In other words, it is only in an open society that sociology can flourish. And an open society is necessarily a modernised society or, to put it differently, modernisation is impossible without 'openness'. A sociologist has therefore a vested interest in an open society; it is a precondition of his efficient and full functioning. In this connection, I would suggest that comparative studies of the development of sociology in countries with different political and economic systems would be an important area of research in the sociology of knowledge.

A word is necessary here by way of caution. There may be vested interests even in a politically open society and these interests may prevent the unfettered conduct as well as the publication of sociological research. Even more important, control over research funds may determine the general direction of research with the result that vital and sensitive areas may suffer grievous neglect. The kind of talent that gets attracted to sociology, the state of development of professional bodies, and the quality of leadership that is available in the discipline are all additional factors in research. In other words, sociologists have to be continually alert to see that research into all aspects of the society exists as a reality and not merely as a possibility. There is a danger, and this is particularly likely in developing countries, of sociologists becoming the instruments of the government and losing one of their most important assets—the objectivity that comes from long professional training.

I shall now consider briefly the heuristic utility of dichotomising entire societies and cultures into traditional/modern. Such a dichotomisation also carries with it the assumption that modernised societies are without traditions. This view is so absurd that I shall not spend any time exposing its absurdity. On the other side there hardly exists today any society which is still purely 'traditional'. Western civilisation is so ubiquitous that communities which enjoyed

considerable isolation even as recently as thirty years ago, have now come under its influence. In discussing the distinction between traditional and modern societies, western countries become inevitably models of modernisation while non-Western countries become models of traditionalism. In this connection, it would be worthwhile to ask whether the equation of Western with modern is a unitary category. It includes a whole range of countries from Great Britain and the USA at one end, to Portugal or Albania at the other. Are there no traces of traditionalism in their attitude to women, and to ethnic minorities such as Jews, Blacks, Browns and Yellows? Is the ascriptive principle totally absent in these societies? The attitude towards birth control in many western Catholic countries is far less 'modern' than in India today.

Further, what are the implications for understanding the process of modernisation, of the recent violent outbursts of racial violence in the United States and Britain? What is the significance of the sudden and surprising popularity in the West of such non-'modern' phenomena as Yoga, the cult of the hippies, and arranged marriages? In asking these questions I am only attempting to stress the need to view the modernisation process in a time perspective. Single points or ahistorical studies of modernisation are likely to result in a distorted view. Besides, it is not safe to assume that modernisation is a cumulative process—there may be setbacks.

For analytical purposes, modernisation may be divided into subareas, the kind of division adopted in each case being dependent on the problem with which the scholar is concerned. With this prefatory remark, I would like to divide modernisation into the following areas: (a) material culture, including technology; (b) social institutions, and (c) knowledge, values and attitudes. It is necessary to remember that while these three areas are linked with each other they also enjoy a certain amount of mutual autonomy or discreetness. I am aware that this sounds contradictory but in discussing highly complex phenomena the coexistence of linkage as well as autonomy is not unusual. It is only in societies where technology is primitive, communications are under-developed, and the degree of the monetisation of the economy is minimal, that social relationships are so closely intermeshed with each other that changes in one area may be followed by changes everywhere else, though even here the linkage may be weaker in some areas than in others. In such societies face-to-face relationships tend to predominate

and a small number of people are linked to each other by a variety of bonds which Gluckman has called 'multiplex' in contrast to modern societies where relationships tend to be uniplex.

In discussing the process of modernisation one is struck by the relative ease with which material culture from outside is borrowed. Thus, western dress is much easier to borrow than parliamentary democracy or the scientific method. The lag between technology and social institutions and values is a commonplace of sociology, and is universal. It may be noted here that the consumption of the products of modern technology does not only have a utilitarian significance but also confers prestige on the consumer. This is a factor in the spread of Western or Western-type consumer goods in Indian villages. But it is necessary to remember that rural youths who use these goods are more exposed to the forces of the outside world than the others. That is, the use of the objects of Western material culture might pave the way to westernisation in a more intangible and fundamental sense.

In order to illustrate the complexity of the process subsumed under modernisation and their mutual linkage I would like to consider briefly nationalism, a phenomenon that is generally considered to be an integral part of modernisation. Nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon in world history, and it presupposes an infrastructure of developed communications and an army, bureaucracy and other agencies of modern government. And it generally provides the impetus to the introduction of radical changes in the customs and institutions of the country concerned. But nationalism may also subject the country in question to all kinds of hazards. Patriotism for the country can turn into jingoism, and the urge to be free from alien domination may soon give way to an urge to dominate over other countries. Mass media of communication may become instruments for whipping up national hysteria, and for propagating ideas about racial superiority and national destiny. This type of phenomenon is believed to be peculiar to totalitarian countries. Such a view, however, turns a blind eye to the distortions that may occur in democracies.

There is yet another kind of hazard to which nationalism exposes a country. It brings in its train heightened awareness to group identities at all levels. It is necessary to stress this because there is a tendency on the part of the educated in the developing countries to identify nationalism with loyalty to the highest political entity and

regard lesser loyalties as less than legitimate. Such a tendency represents a failure to recognise the fact that when self-consciousness comes to a people it effects them at every nodal point in the social structure. In the case of India, this means that nationalism brings about loyalty not only to the country as a whole but also to caste, sect, religion, region and language. And in the context of mass illiteracy, adult suffrage may result in lesser loyalties proving to be more powerful. That is, sub-national loyalties may become powerful enough to destroy nationalism.

Self-consciousness inevitably results in the reinterpretation of traditional institutions and ideas giving rise to a complex amalgam in which the traditional and modern are mixed together in a new synthesis. There is a tendency on the part of the educated to ignore the 'modern' component in such syntheses and to describe the reformulation as only 'revivalistic'. For instance, the Arya Samaj movement represents an attempt to 'modernise' nineteenth century Hinduism in parts of North India and the fact that the reformulation was expressed in the pseudo-traditionalistic terms of a return to the *Vedas* ought not to be allowed to mislead students as to the true nature of the phenomenon. It is a commonplace that nationalism results in the reinterpretation of history and mythology and other elements of traditional culture. In the case of ancient civilisations such as India it gives birth to a collective preoccupation with the past, and antiquarian pursuits come to have a political significance in that they contribute to national pride and self-respect. But this can degenerate into national indulgence in fantasy or collective megalomania resulting in war against neighbouring countries.

I would like to refer here briefly to an obscurantism which seems to be a carry over of nationalism to sociology in India. Indian society, it is argued, is unique and Indians have spiritual and moral ideas such as *karma*, *dharma*, and *moksha* which other peoples do not. Therefore, only Indians can understand their society. Indian society is indeed unique in the sense that it is the product of an unrepeatable series of historical events occurring in a particular part of the world. In this sense, however, every society on the surface of this earth is unique, and uniqueness is not peculiar to India. I have a certain amount of sympathy with the point of view that no outsider can understand a society as completely as an able, sensitive and well-trained indigenous sociologist. But I am also aware that an outsider enjoys advantages in observation which are denied to natives. In

brief, outsider and insider enjoy different kinds of advantages and disadvantages, and in the study of vast and ancient societies such as India this question may have implications and consequences that, to me at any rate, are fully clear. Finally, all societies have their own moral and religious ideas, and it is stretching credibility too far to believe that Indian moral and religious ideas are superior to those of the other countries. The claim does indeed appear pathetic were it not for the fact that it is fraught with dangerous consequences for the future of the country.

I have spent a little time on the appearance of obscurantism in Indian sociology for the reason that xenophobia is a disease to which new nations are particularly prone, and it can come from a variety of sources, Right, Left or Centre. And since I believe that an open society is essential to sociology and since I am against obscurantism of all sorts and from all quarters I thought I should not miss an opportunity to express my sense of unease at some of the tendencies which I see around me. Indian society has been undergoing far-reaching changes over the last two hundred years. The nature of the changes and their implications vary from one region to another, one section to another, and one set of institutions to another. Assuming that some or all of these changes can be subsumed under modernisation, India today provides a vast and fascinating laboratory for research into modernisation of institutions and individuals, and the kinds of linkage which modernisation in one area has with other areas needs to be studied carefully, and it is not unlikely that a picture of the general drift of the changes may be teased out from a number of such studies. Better insights into the modernisation process can be obtained if a comparative approach is brought to bear on the above studies, especially comparison with neighbouring countries.

I would now like to dwell a little on the oft heard comment that Indians do not have a sense of contradiction, or that it does not have the same emotional and other implications for them as it has for Westerners. I shall give below a few examples of such contradiction. Scientists from Kerala and Tamilnadu employed in a meteorological institution are known scrupulously to avoid doing anything important or auspicious during that part of the day which is believed to be presided over by the inauspicious *Rahu*, one of the nine planets of Indian astrology. A chart showing the period of each day of the week presided over by *Rahu*, is frequently hung on a domestic wall.

South Indian calendars and diaries generally show *Rahukala*. According to Hindu mythology, *Rahu* is a demon whose head was cut off by Vishnu after he had attempted to drink the nectar obtained at the churning of the ocean, but, having become immortal, periodically revenged himself on his betrayers, the sun and the moon, by swallowing them at the time of eclipse. The interesting point in the above example is that people who have been trained to study weather phenomena in terms of the operation of impersonal forces perceive no contradiction between their professional activity and their astrological beliefs. It is likely that these scientists also observe the food and other taboos which orthodox Hindus observe during an eclipse.

Belief in astrology is widespread though politicians and businessmen are generally singled out for ribald comment in this context. When the Communists first came to power in Kerala in 1957 they took care to see that the ministers were sworn in during an auspicious time. There was indeed some discussion about the propriety of the Communist Party of India, committed to secularism and rationalism, conforming to outdated superstitions, but it was pointed out by some that since most people in Kerala believed in astrology, Communists had to be sworn in at an auspicious time, otherwise the people would conclude that the Communists would be thrown out of power prematurely.

Jawaharlal Nehru claimed all his life to be a rationalist and socialist though somewhat different to other rationalists in his articulated sensitivity to spiritual values. During the post-independence years he made it a point to criticise faith in astrology, whenever he could. Perhaps he found the tendency of his colleagues in cabinet to go to astrologers at the slightest provocation highly irritating. It therefore comes as a surprise to find him writing, in 1944, to his daughter asking her 'to get a proper horoscope by a competent person'[3] for his newly-born grandson. He adds that 'Such permanent records of the date and time of birth are desirable. As for the time, I suppose the proper time should be mentioned and not the artificial time which is being used outside now. War time is at least an hour ahead of normal time.'[4] If he only wanted an accurate record of the date and time of birth would not a birth certificate have been enough?

[3]Letter No. 74 in *Nehru's Letters*, edited by Krishna Hutheesing, London, 1960.

[4]Ibid.

Jawaharlal Nehru also desired that his ashes should be immersed in the Ganges at Allahabad. He made it clear, however, that he wanted this done not because of the usual Hindu idea that such immersion was religiously meritorious but because of his sentimental regard for the river of his childhood flowing in this natal city of Allahabad. He also wanted his ashes to be sprayed from a plane on Indian soil.

Brajesh Singh, an Indian Communist, Prince of Kalakankar, who married Svetlana Alliluyeva, daughter of Stalin, also wanted his ashes to be immersed in the bosom of mother Ganga at Allahabad, and Svetlana undertook a pious journey to India out of regard for her dead husband's wishes. There is a curiously apposite irony in this journey which the daughter of the most powerful atheist in history undertook to respect an ancient superstition of the Hindus.

My aim in narrating the above incidents is to make the point that even Western-educated Indians, self-declared rationalists and Communists, behave in a manner that seems to ignore seeming contradictions. I shall now briefly explore the sources of these contradictions but before I do so I should make the point that perhaps such contradictions occur in other cultures also, including Western cultures, though they may not be as egregious as in Indian culture.

A source of contradiction in behaviour which is universal stems from role-conflict. Behaviour in roles such as citizen, official, legislator, may conflict with familial and kinship roles such as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, etc. In his role as official or legislator a man may do one thing which he may totally disregard in his role as father or uncle. A Member of Parliament may have voted enthusiastically for the abolition of the dowry but when it comes to the marriage of his daughter, he may pay it like other people. A politician may strongly advocate teaching through Indian languages but may send his own children to English-medium schools.

It is not unlikely that developing societies which are not only trying to modernise but are also under a compulsion to appear modernised pass legislation without a serious intent to implement it. This may itself be a source of contradiction or inconsistency in the behaviour of individuals. In addition, it is likely that there is more contradiction in behaviour in developing countries because of the pace of social change and the extent of the break with traditional culture. It is perhaps only a transient phenomenon, and the compulsion to be consistent might increase as the modernisation

process gathers momentum. However, contradiction may not always be due to role-conflict. A man's own interest or inclination may run counter to his proposed principle. Thus a man may be aware of the danger of eating exposed food but may not be able to resist the temptation when he actually confronts such food. Habits formed early in life may prevail over knowledge. That this occurs all over the world would be rapidly conceded but the type of contradictions which I am concerned with are institutionalised contradictions.

I shall now consider the possibility that there is something in Indian society and culture which makes Indians, including the educated, less sensitive to contradiction than members of other societies. I have deliberately listed this explanation last as I am not quite certain about its validity and I offer it as a purely tentative one. Caste is fundamental to Indian society, and it necessarily implies acceptance of pluralism in culture. People get used to cultural and ethical relativism though such relativism is qualified by an attempt, not always successful, to subsume the various systems in a hierarchy. This relativism is at the basis of Indian 'tolerance' while the hierarchy explains indifference if not arrogance on the part of the higher groups to the cultures or life-styles of the lower. Indian theological thinking is also characterised by relativism-cum-hierarchy. Indian thinkers are able to accept the propitiation of a village goddess with buffalo sacrifice while at the same time asserting that the highest form of worship is offering a fruit or flower to a single god, if not contemplation on an attributeless Brahman.

Diverse styles of life, codes of conduct and belief systems can coexist in a caste society. It is true that all the styles of life do not have the same validity and one is extolled above the others. That is, the idea of hierarchy is the price paid for the acceptance of cultural pluralism. There is no idea that one's style of life should be imposed on others—in fact, the opposite idea prevails that different castes have different styles of life. Though in Sanskritic Hinduism one style of life is rated above all the others, at the existential level it is seen that there was rivalry between different styles of life, between that of the Brahmin and Kshatriya or of the Brahmin and Vaishya. The idea of hierarchy as well as theological concepts such as *sansara*, *karma* and *dharma* helped in building bridges between diverse and conflicting ways of life. A pantheistic philosophy which saw God in everything and the same God in the buffalo-consuming

Kali as well as the attributeless Brahmin also ignored differences and contradictions.

Indian society is changing rapidly and it is possible that the urge to consistency may become stronger. It is not unlikely that this may be accompanied by increased mental illness. I am assuming here that the way a culture regards contradictions in behaviour has consequences for the mental health of its population.

*Planning**

A. K. Sen

If the shape of Cleopatra's nose left a lasting mark on human history, the peculiarity lay not in the nose but in human gullibility that valued the object more than the loss of an empire, not to mention the lives of thousands of Egyptians and Romans. Modern leaders are not given such freedom to choose what they like, and if they reveal an undue fondness for such an object, Macmillan accepts their resignation and then resigns himself. Times have changed and so have old values. The noble art of sacrificing others for the greatness of one's love does not any longer get applause, and is no more alive today as a virtue than are dinosaurs as animals. But some old values have remarkable staying power, particularly in our sub-continent, and scratching our minds is like looking at the collection of extinct animals in Conan Doyle's *Lost World.* Just as an illustration one can cite the grief and shock with which so many people in India greeted the news, some time after the end of the Second World War, that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had married, while in Germany, and had a child. Rather than jubilating at this merry news, many of Netaji's admirers were stunned by the shock that the great leader did not, after all, stick to *brahmacharya.* The shock did not seem to be particularly less for those who themselves had given up the spiritual advantages of *brahmacharya* for a less wholesome marital existence!

The mark of our value system, derived from our past, can be seen in most spheres of life in modern India. I am not referring to such obvious things as the roaming cows in the streets, which provides the joking interlude in the American tourists' letters to folks back home, but to things which are more subtle and a great deal more important. For example, our attitude to education has immense consequences on the direction of our economic and social change. Indian society has always been elitist, and this is reflected in the development of education in India. A contrast between India and

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Burma may be useful here. The broad base of the Buddhist religion reflects itself in a much higher proportion of literacy in the latter country; on the other hand, the value traditionally attached to higher learning in India reveals itself in a much higher pressure for university education in India.

By the way, in case it is doubted that Buddhism and high literacy in Burma have anything to do with each other, it may be pointed out that much of elementary education in Burma is in fact directly imparted in Buddhist temples and monasteries. Also, it is worth recording that there is no Buddhist country in the world which does not have a much higher proportion of literacy than India, and at the same time there is none, except Japan, which can claim as much achievement in the field of university education. An Indian middle class youth finds it difficult even to get a bride if he does not possess some official stamp of higher education, for what it is worth, but this does not worry his Burmese counterpart. On the other hand, the Indian at the bottom of the ladder does not feel deprived about not knowing the letters, but his Burmese opposite number would.

The consequence of our neglected base of primary education is often underestimated by the economists. Our field of relative success has been the industries; a network of modern urban communities has grown up. But our chief failure has been in agriculture, where in spite of applying a fantastic amount of labour per acre we get one of the lowest yields in the world. Ignorance with illiteracy is, of course, not the only cause of this, but is a very big contributory factor, and here the ruling values of the Indian society have not been a good influence.

We are very fond of saying, these days, that planning must be done from the bottom upwards and not from the top, and we love to point out that the Indian planning authorities have not achieved much communication with the masses. But we do not seem to realise that our social background, our economic structure, our educational base, all militate against such communication. The remedy lies not in telling the Planning Commission: 'Go and communicate, and plan from the bottom upwards', but in creating the conditions for the masses to be brought into the twentieth century, so that they can see what has happened in the last two hundred years. The main achievement of the USSR in the early years of her planning was not so much the improvement of her material resources, but her success in getting education and awareness to the whole of the

population of that big country. The only Asian country which has so far jumped the hurdle of the industrial revolution is Japan, and she had one of the highest proportions of literacy in the world even before her remarkable economic growth started.

The emphasis we place on liberal higher education compared with the coolness with which we accept our literacy situation is something quite appalling, and the explanation lies very much in the kind of values we have been brought up on. In fact, any suggestion that we should try to get much more quickly towards universal literacy seems to produce certain stock reactions among the urbanised middle class of India. Three precepts loom large in this: 'literacy is not the same thing as education', 'good things take a lot of time', and 'we are already doing a lot'. All these have just enough truth in them to make them sound plausible, but their supposed justification of smugness about our current educational programme, is entirely hollow. That the rural sector of India has been the most slow-moving part of the economy and has been largely responsible for the failures of Indian planning, seems to be recognised, but we do not seem to appreciate its full implications. We like to view our peasants as poor but contented, illiterate but wise, and forget that wisdom comes less often from the peace of the mind than from a restless search for knowledge. We have done very little to provide a base for such a search, and the peasant has remained contented with his poverty and disease, and with his low productivity and wholesale exploitation. Even our limited land reforms have resulted mainly from demands from the town dwellers, and not from the just anger of the rural population, which has hardly expressed itself. And so far as modern methods of production are concerned, with which the rest of the world has raised the yield per acre to a figure many times ours, they have hardly fired the imagination of our rural population.

The educational policy of India is a good example of the grip of old values and attitudes. There are, of course, others that are no less significant for the direction of our planning today. The peculiarity of the brand of socialism that we champion in India is not unrelated to it. In our disapproval of the businessman, of the bourgeosie, there is a strong element that smacks not of the proletarian revolt, but of the old aristocratic (almost Brahminical) disapproval of the money-makers. Indian socialism has, therefore, emphasised austerity rather than egality, strict controls rather than nationalisation of

means of production. Again I do not want to suggest that our value system, acquired from the past, is alone responsible for all this, but it is certainly a force which has worked in that direction.

So far the discussion has been confined to the influence of values on the direction of planning. But a no less important field is its impact on individual behaviour. All pre-industrialised, pre-capitalist societies share certain attitudes that have, to a greater or less extent, come in the way of successful industrialisation. They are, to be sure, eventually overcome, but they can cause a lot of anxiety while they last. For example, industries require punctuality and a habit of regular work in a way agriculture never did, and this can be a headache in spreading industries to remote areas.

How the attitudes of different people in different cultures vary on this question came vividly to me in a seminar in the summer of 1962, where Eric Hobsbawm, the economic historian, was speaking on certain problems of early industrialisation, referring in particular to the problem that the Soviet Union had in getting workers to the factories on time. In the audience was a young man from West Germany, neat and efficient, who seemed to have some difficulty in seeing what the problem was about, and the exchange of thoughts went like this. The German participant: 'This must have been in some part of the USSR where they do not follow Russian.' Hobsbawm: 'No, no, the problem was encountered in European Russia also.' The German participant: 'Oh, I see, then they must have been illiterate and could not read, so that they could not be informed by putting up a notice.' Hobsbawm: 'No, they could read all right.' The German participant: 'I don't understand, if they understood Russian and could read, why could not the factory authorities simply put up a notice asking them to come on time, say, at 9 o'clock?' The problem that you might read a notice asking you to come at nine, and nevertheless not come at nine, had an air of improbability for this efficient Saxon. (How can one resist a notice saying: Come at nine!) I suspect that among the many reasons for which the Russian steel plant at Bhilai has worked so much better than the German one in Rourkela, is the experience of the Russians of some of the problems that we face in India today, which are really rather remote to the Germans.

These are common problems all over the underdeveloped world, but we have our special ones also. So much has been written on our attitude to animals, of the holy and the unholy ones, that I need not

go into their economic implications, for example, for the leather industry. But our attitude to public hygiene seems to deserve some comment. Some Indians were shocked by the account of V. S. Naipaul, the famous West Indian writer (of Indian origin), of his visit to Calcutta, which came out in the *New Statesman* in 1963, where it seemed that the smell of the lavatory more or less overshadowed other aspects of Calcutta for this unfortunate visitor. It can, of course, be disputed whether Naipaul saw the country or the city in its right perspective, but the fact remains that our cities show a deplorable state of our consciousness of sanitation and hygiene, beating records of practically all other cities of the world. If the archaeologist's first impression of the ancient Mohenjo-Daro is that of a superb system of public sanitation, enough has been done in the last five thousand years to undo any tradition which might have existed. India continues to be one of the two remaining centres of cholera in the world (the other is Pakistan), and our record for other diseases certainly does not seem to indicate that we have been seriously planning for the last thirteen years. It is pointed out by experts making international comparisons that they have not often seen as appalling hygienic conditions in the factories as in India. This, of course, is partly due to poverty, partly to what our industrialists proudly call their 'sound commercial instincts', but it is also connected with our general indifference to hygienic precepts.

So far we have looked only at values which are part of our habit of thinking and action. There are other well-formulated doctrines that sometimes take the form of religion, and sometimes appear in the shape of secular morality. But, curiously as it may seem, these have contributed relatively less to the holding up of change in India than might have been expected. Part of the reason for this is that obsolete doctrines are quietly dropped, or what happens more often, radically reinterpreted to suit the requirements of the present day.

The success of the nineteenth-century reformists in India lay mainly in this, and people like Rammohun Roy, Vidyasagar and Vivekananda reinterpreted aspects of Indian culture to make them look very different from what they were then taken to be. The scriptures were searched with the same zeal with which a customs officer goes through one's baggage, and the relevant articles brought out from the heap of other things. The whole interpretation of Indian culture was changed. Gandhiji's derivation of lessons of non-violence from a document reporting Krishna's advice to Arjuna as to why he should

fight, illustrates the point very well. No doubt there were elements in the *Gita* which allowed such an interpretation, but what gave this approach its force, was Gandhiji's own strength of moral conviction. While future scholars will write tomes on what Krishna 'really meant', the *Gita* has played the part it has in modern India's national movement mainly through Gandhiji's interpretation.

The grip of past values relaxes when the society changes, and people reinterpret old values in modern terms. Nehru's and Radhakrishnan's elucidation of the synthetic elements of Indian culture made even our policy of non-alignment look a natural outgrowth from it. President Nasser has read more socialism in the *Quran* than Saudi Arabian rulers may like, but that is bad luck for the latter. What gives Nasser almost sure promise of victory in his broader interpretation is not his scholastic genius, but the fact that his interpretation fits into the twentieth century in a way the Saudi Arabian one does not.

Continuing in the same line, I may be forgiven a small note of criticism of the poser of the problem for this issue, which I find otherwise very appealing. It is stated, 'If there is a confusion of values in India today it is due to this fundamental cleavage in our thinking, represented by Gandhism on the one side and our five year plans on the other.' I doubt that this is true. Mahatma Gandhi was passionately worried about human welfare and dignity, and the ugly face of early industrialism shocked him much the same way as it shocked Marx in mid-nineteenth-century Europe. It took Marx to socialism, Gandhiji to the village industries, and the Indian National Congress to equivocation.

Some people may claim, and I certainly would, that there is a contradiction between Gandhiji's love of human welfare, his hatred of poverty, ill-health and distress on the one side, and his desire to keep India confined to rather primitive methods of production, on the other. In contrast, Nehru could see the benign face of industrialism when properly planned, and so his support to five year plans was very much in line with Gandhiji's fundamental objects and aspirations. The object of machines is to save toil, not to increase it, and I refuse to believe that if the full economic and social implications of the different policies were held before Gandhiji, he would have chosen drudgery. This also explains why the respect for the basic values of Gandhiji has widened over time, while support for

his specific economic recommendations has dwindled. For the very same reason for which Gandhiji's passion for human welfare and dignity will undoubtedly survive, his rejection of modern machines will not.

If there is a 'confusion of values' in India, it is not, I submit, because of a 'fundamental cleavage' between Gandhism and the five year plans. The enemy of the five year plans are not these doctrines, but the very social background which needs change, and the deep-seated, ill-formulated values which haunt our life rather like the ghost of the dead chief in Tagore's story of *Kartar Bhut*. The values which hamper successful planned development are the ones that cannot be examined because they are not stated, and cannot be easily challenged because their acceptance is almost imperceptible. I have tried to give some examples of these attitudes, such as that towards mass education, particularly rural education, but there are others which are almost equally pernicious for economic and social progress. The 'fundamental cleavage' is likely to turn out to be one between our well-formulated goals of economic development and social justice, and the ill-stated, ill-recognised forces which make us plan and act in a way which makes these goals so much more distant.

*The Social Sciences**

ANDRE BETEILLE

In the twenty-five years since independence, and particularly during the last decade, the social sciences have come to make their presence increasingly felt in this country. They are no longer confined to the universities. Many centres of research and study in the social sciences have grown up under various types of sponsorship. Some people have viewed these developments with enthusiasm and others with misgiving. Perhaps the majority have not made up their minds as to whether what is happening is good or bad. In these circumstances, it may be useful to raise a few questions on the place of the social sciences in the life of this country.

The social sciences are not all of the same kind. They differ in their theories and methods and also in the kinds of facts they collect. Some, like economics, have developed much in the way of formal theory; others, like sociology, concentrate more on the collection and interpretation of facts. Again, history and social anthropology differ greatly in their methods of collecting facts and to some extent in the types of interpretations they offer. If we assume for the moment that all these different disciplines have some social function, then clearly they do not all have the same kind of function. The different disciplines have developed at unequal rates. Some, like economics, have developed much more rapidly than others. While it is important to remember this, too much should not be made of these time-lags in the development of the different disciplines. One often hears sociologists say that their discipline can solve the same kinds of problems as economics, only it has not been in the field long enough. This is probably an illusion. Historians (or political theorists) do not solve the same kinds of problems as economists, and they have been in the field much longer.

Two issues which would appear to be of immediate concern are those of quality and of relevance. These are both complex issues and

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each raises a number of difficult questions. Is the quality of the social sciences improving or stagnating? If we are to judge the quality of our products, what kinds of standards should we use? Perhaps we should judge our research not merely by its quality but also by its relevance to the society in which we live. What kinds of criteria are to decide what is relevant? I raise these questions at the outset to indicate that the relationship between quality and relevance is at best ambiguous. Not very long ago, what seemed to concern people most about the state of the social sciences was their quality. It was often said that the quality of our social sciences was not good enough or that it was not catching up fast enough with international standards. It could be shown fairly easily that international standards are not always a reliable measure of every type of activity. So, people turned to relevance and began to argue that our work in the social sciences must be judged by its relevance. However, it may be unwise to assume that the measure of relevance is any more self-evident than is the measure of quality.

Perhaps, the easiest way of determining relevance is in relation to planning and policy-making. Many of the subjects we are discussing are in fact described by some as the policy sciences. It is well known that expertise in the social sciences is being directly used in planning and policy-making, particularly in countries like India. What can the social sciences contribute to these processes? Should their social function be assessed solely or even primarily in terms of their contribution to planning and policy-making? These questions acquire particular urgency in the light of current discussions on priorities in social science research. Should these priorities be determined in terms of the needs of planning and policy-making?

Among the social sciences, economics is believed to occupy a pre-eminent position as a policy science, and people working in other disciplines are sometimes advised to take economics as their model. There is no doubt that the areas of planning and policy-making on which economists can give expert advice are many. Their role in public life has been greatly enlarged since the country embarked on a programme of economic planning shortly after independence. One notices this concern for planning and policy-making among economists at every level, from professional experts to undergraduate students. Some of it has rubbed off on the other social sciences since planning can be conceived broadly to include not just economic matters but also the wider social and political

reality. Not everyone is equally enthusiastic about the contribution which the social scientists have actually made to planning and policy-making. Many would argue that if they have a role to play in these matters, they have until now played it inadequately. The entire planning machinery and the role of the experts in it have been criticised for their many inadequacies, and the critics include eminent economists. It has been said that if this country has achieved any economic advance, the economists have contributed little to it.

To be critical of the performance of the economists is not necessarily to suggest an alternative role for him. Economists do in fact criticise each other on a variety of grounds—for being immersed in formal and abstract problems, for not having the proper methodology, or for not being sufficiently empirical. But if one examines these criticisms closely one will find that what is being most often attacked is the lack of an effective approach to the problem of economic development. The search for such an approach whose application would yield results of practical value would be regarded by most as both reasonable and desirable.

When we turn to some of the other social sciences, for instance, sociology, we find that not only the performance of these disciplines but also their role may be viewed in a different light. While the majority of economists—at least in this country—regard their discipline as being of direct value in the solution of at least some kinds of concrete, practical problems, the sociologists would be much more divided among themselves on a question of this nature. And if we take history and political science then, clearly, we are dealing with disciplines whose social function will lie in their being able to do something other than solving concrete, practical problems. The case of sociology is especially interesting because it seems not to have been able to make up its mind as to what kind of role it should create for itself. There are first of all those sociologists who would like to see their discipline being associated closely and directly with the processes of planning and national development. They would seek affinity with the economist and see their role as being quite different from that of the historian or the philosopher. Some of them would like to describe their work as social engineering. There are various reasons why sociologists might like to play this kind of role. At the level of values, there would be the satisfaction of contributing in a useful way to a wider social purpose; very few ends are more noble than those of national development. At the level of interests, it is

this kind of role which would enable them to command the largest resources; social scientists are no more free than others from the common human weakness for material gain.

Let us concede in principle that sociologists can contribute directly to the solution of specific practical problems. We would then expect them to recommend the selection of some problems of study more than others. They would be problems like community development, caste tensions and family planning. These could all be described as social problems and not just sociological problems. Studies have in fact been made of all the three problems mentioned above—and many others—during the last two decades, and they have thrown some light on certain aspects of our society. But it is doubtful whether they have yielded any results of substantial practical value. Some sociologists would indeed argue that studies of this kind are generally wasteful if they are designed to arrive at concrete policy recommendations; such recommendations could be reached more easily by the application of common sense to the facts more or less carefully observed. It is not that sociologists never make useful recommendations, but, rather, that anyone with average intelligence might make similar recommendations although he might not be able to back them up by using the appropriate technical language.

We then come to those sociologists who view their discipline not as social engineering but as a vehicle for arriving at a more critical understanding of the society in which they live. Such a role is more akin to the role of history or of philosophy. The study of history tells us about the past so that we may understand the present a little better. The study of philosophy tells us about problems which have worried people in all ages and in all societies without any final solution being found for them. In each society these problems take their own specific forms. Perhaps we shall never be able to find solutions for all of them; but this does not mean that we should not worry about them. If sociologists conceive of their function in this way, i.e., not as social engineering but as critical understanding, then they might emphasise the study of a somewhat different range of problems. Instead of studying community development, caste tensions or family planning, they might study social inequality, the meaning of ritual or the forms of kinship. Obviously, the study of kinship may be of some indirect practical value, but the main justification for studying, say, the forms of the joint family cannot be that it will contribute directly to planning for national development.

To engage in the task of critical understanding is not to play the role of the disinterested bystander. By analysing the forms and functions of social institutions, the sociologist can help people to gain a deeper insight into the true nature of the constraints under which they live. He can also help them to understand better what choices are open to them and what price has to be paid for every choice they make. If this be the case, then the sociologist does not construct a new society as the engineer constructs a bridge; he only contributes to the awareness out of which people create their own society.

It would thus appear that the social sciences might perform at least two different functions, those of social engineering and of critical understanding. Among the social sciences, economics might concentrate more on social engineering although political economy in the wider sense of the term has much to contribute to critical understanding. History and political science would contribute to critical understanding rather than social engineering. Sociology and social anthropology might contribute a little to both.

Another set of questions would relate to the consumers and the audience of the social scientist. For whom does the social scientist write? To whom should he be accountable and by whom is his work to be judged? In one sense every social scientist, to the extent that he writes as a scholar, writes for his profession. Very often the first fruits of his research appear as papers in professional journals or as monographs which are usually published in limited editions. Professional journals and research monographs are nowhere meant to be read by the general public. They are addressed to a body of specialists and their quality can be judged only by specialists and according to professional standards.

It is a truism that professional standards do not remain fixed for ever but change over time. What is more important from our point of view is that they also differ greatly from one country to another. This has been a cause for anxiety in countries such as ours, where professional standards are sometimes well below what are called international standards but are in effect the standards prevalent in the advanced countries. Should the social scientist pursue problems of research which he considers relevant and interesting without concern for the highest professional standards, or should he seek to attain the highest international standards without concern for the nature and significance of the problems he investigates? No easy answer can be found to this question but, clearly, at one level the

social scientist will be accountable to his profession, in whatever terms he defines it.

The social scientist does not, of course, write only for his profession. Were he to do so, there would hardly be any point in talking about the social functions of his work. Although the standards of the social scientist's work will be assessed by his professional colleagues, its relevance will probably have to be judged by a larger audience or, at least, in relation to it. Besides addressing himself to his profession, the social scientist might also address himself to government. He might work to the requirements of government. Alternatively, he might work for some other organisation like an industry or a religious body. Since the problems in these cases are to some extent similar, I will consider only what happens when the social scientist works for government or orientates his work to the requirements of government.

Social scientists in this country have become increasingly dependent on government for sponsoring their research. This dependence has grown rapidly with the growth of planning for economic development and social welfare. Economists occupy a special position among social scientists for they are the ones whose expert services are most in demand and for the widest range of occasions. Social anthropologists and sociologists have also sought to make their services increasingly available to government. In the present climate many people have begun to feel that the measure of importance of a social science is the extent to which its services are sought by government. In a country such as ours, the relationship between government and the social sciences is likely to be both complex and subtle and it is of the utmost importance that the nature of this relationship be clearly understood and widely discussed. It would be fair to say that in India, government has not sought to dominate the social science professions directly. But this would be small consolation if these professions were to reduce themselves to client status of their own accord. The danger to too close a relationship between them and government is that such a relationship is by its nature asymmetrical.

One way in which these professions might reduce themselves to client status is by having their priorities of research determined by government. There are certain types of research which government might need to have done urgently, and it would only be fair for the social scientist to offer his services in such cases. But this is different

from determining the priorities of research in general. There are various ways in which government might have a hand in setting up the priorities of research. These might be determined by governmental committees or by committees of independent experts set up under governmental sponsorship. The line between dependent and independent experts is likely to be thin, particularly when all or most such experts have to depend for financial support on government. And, if the main object of social science research is critical understanding, it is difficult to see by what right any committee of experts—dependent or independent—can determine priorities of research for others.

The urge to be of help to government cannot be lightly dismissed although it is often misconceived. In countries like India there are many programmes of social change which can be initiated only by government. But this is not all. There are aspects of our society—poverty, inequality, communalism—in which most of us would like to see changes; and many would like to make their own contributions to these changes. Clearly, it would be a strange view for the social scientist to take that only those changes are worth having in a society which can be brought about by government. Social scientists who take a different view of social change and what they might contribute to it would address themselves not to government but to the public. The term 'public' is not easy to define and one might well ask how the social scientist is to address himself to the public in a country where over half the people are illiterate. This would be to take a pedantic approach to the problem. In no society is the public a fixed category and it is partly up to the social scientist not only to contribute to the formation of public opinion but also to extend the range of public participation in national debates. It is in this sense that the social scientist holds himself ultimately accountable to the public.

The two ways of viewing the function of the social scientist discussed in the last section are probably related to the two ways of viewing his responsibility discussed in the present one. The social scientist who views his function as social engineering is the one who is most likely to hold himself accountable to government; to contribute effectively to social engineering one must have access to vast financial resources and even the research on which it is based is likely to be expensive. By contrast, those who view their contribution as critical understanding are likely to define their larger

responsibility in relation to the public rather than government.

A third set of problems relates to the funding and organisation of research. Here again one could distinguish two styles of research based on two patterns of organisation. One hears frequently that research in the social sciences is becoming more and more expensive so that we might soon reach a state where no research worth the name will be possible without large-scale financial support. Many people feel that this is the direction in which the social sciences are moving in this country. We must ask ourselves whether this development is inevitable and whether any attempt to check it is necessary or desirable.

Today, the social scientist who embarks on a career of research tends increasingly to view his work as a project or a series of projects. This seems to be a response to the growth of agencies and organisations which are taking over what may be described as the management of research. In the last century there were some who foresaw a time when teaching and research would be done by separate sets of persons. We seem to be approaching a stage where the management of research becomes a new occupation, different from and generally enjoying more authority and prestige than research itself.

A research project requires to be organised. It must have a budget and a time schedule and it must produce tangible results usually in the form of a report. Those who undertake projects must adjust themselves to a certain pattern. When a research worker undertakes a new project, he is almost always able to assure himself that he will be able to work at his own pace. In course of time he loses this feeling of assurance. In the end practically all of them feel that they are being made to work under pressure. Some try to rationalise their predicament by telling themselves (and their colleagues) that they have to deal with sponsors who are particularly unreasonable. The project type of research tends to develop not only its own pace but also its own scale of work. For one thing, project directors begin to feel that by expanding their staff they will be able to complete their work quickly, although this is often an illusion. For another, when vast resources are available, research centres are likely to compete with each other for a larger and larger share of the pie. In course of time the sponsors of research are persuaded that the larger the project the more important will be its findings.

What is to be done? Is there no alternative? The first step towards

an alternative would seem to lie in the simple realisation that not every type of research needs to be defined as a project. After all, individuals still do research in universities on limited budgets and with no commitment to produce within a set period results of fundamental value to the nation. Social scientists who feel overwhelmed by the projects they have undertaken must surely realise that this business did not really get going in India till fifteen or twenty years ago.

It is of course true that many changes have taken place in the country during the last fifteen or twenty years. Planning has become a part of our social reality and it has created its own institutions. It would be unwise, not to say foolish, of the social scientist to ignore these changes or to withdraw from participation in them. Planning for social and economic change requires research, not only for the formulation of proposals but also for the evaluation of their results. Economists have an important and legitimate part to play in these processes and other social scientists have also some contribution to make particularly in regard to evaluation. Obviously, a great deal of this kind of research will have to be done in the form of projects —sometimes quite large projects—with budgets, time schedules and project reports. Also, those social scientists who devote themselves to such projects will have to work in close association with government or agencies sponsored by government.

But, clearly, not all social scientists need to do this kind of work and in some cases work on such projects is bound to divert them from what by their training and aptitude they are best suited to do. Planning is certainly an important part of our social reality but it is not the whole reality. Even the most ardent advocates of planning will admit that it is neither possible nor desirable for a centralised agency to plan every aspect of social life. Many of these other aspects of life are accessible for investigation and research by the older approach based on individual initiative and without any direct commitment about the results of research to government or any other organisation. One could for instance study changes in kinship organisation in India or in the forms and meanings of ritual; or the ways in which perceptions of the social hierarchy are changing. These are all aspects of life in which all members of society and not just professional social scientists may take a legitimate interest. At the same time, the results of such studies are not likely to be of direct or immediate use to those responsible for planning. Such

studies can be pursued by individual scholars and there may not be any need to seek to interest government in giving them financial support.

Any subject of research can be formulated as a project having some bearing on the work of government. In this way, larger financial support will no doubt be secured than for work designed mainly for critical understanding. But social scientists will have to decide for themselves how much they value their independence, what price they are prepared to pay to preserve it, and what they owe to themselves, to their profession and to the public.